THE WORLD'S BEST BOOKS

WILLIAM J. ROBINSON, M.D.

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THE WORLD'S BEST BOOKS

A COMPLETE CLASSIFIED GUIDE TO SELF-CULTURE

BY

DR. WILLIAM J. ROBINSON

No book has a right to exist that has not for its purpose the betterment of mankind by affording either useful instruction or healthful recreation

NEW YORK

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A

Cedar Paul

Sublime Artiste,
Incomparable Traductrice,
Grande Gamine et—Précieuse Amie

W. J. R.

If I were to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me through life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. . . . Give a man this taste, and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making a happy man, unless, indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books.—*Sir John Herschel.*

PREFACE

THE reading of a bad or worthless book works a double injury: It leaves nothing, or nothing good, in the reader's mind, and by taking his time it robs him of the benefit he could have derived from reading a good book. And if he reads many mediocre, worthless or bad books, the injury may become permanent: his mind may become so flabby, so weakened as to render it impossible for him either to appreciate or to enjoy a good book.

A passionate, omnivorous reader since our early childhood, we often deplored the lack of guidance which caused us to waste precious hours on hundreds of worthless, unsuitable or definitely bad books. If you begin a book it is not always easy to throw it away; if it is a book that you have bought you dislike to see your hard-earned money wasted; or you have no other unread book on hand (if you are hungry, you will eat questionable food rather than none at all); or you hope that maybe further on the book will become better and more interesting. And so valuable time is wasted.

With the constantly growing number of books, some sort of guide to reading is becoming an urgent necessity. We had long ago promised ourself, when the fates should grant us some leisure, to compile from the

many thousands of books that we have read in our lifetime, a selection of those books which we considered the *best,* the most *interesting* and the most *useful,* in order to serve as a guide and counsellor to those men and women who have not had the advantage of a university education or of cultured companionship but who possess eager and curious minds and who are yearning to acquire genuine culture.

And as circumstances have favored us with some leisure, we have undertaken the task, and present the result herewith.

W. J. R.

Paris, Sept. 4, 1928.

INTRODUCTION

This book on The World's Best Books differs materially from any list hitherto compiled. It differs not only in its inclusions and exclusions: in this respect no two lists will ever be alike. It differs in four other respects.

First, it explains the reasons for its exclusions. To omit certain "classics" or books of long established reputation without any explanation leaves the reader with an unsatisfied feeling. The thought cannot be avoided that perhaps the compiler was not familiar with those books that he left out. And so this volume in addition to positive advice, what to read, gives also negative advice, telling what not to read and why. And this is a valuable service, because it saves the reader's limited time and energy. It not only guides the reader to the good, but criticizes and keeps him away from the bad or at least the superfluous and the superannuated, or the dull and the difficult.

Second, it does not enumerate the books pell-mell, or in alphabetical order, but classifies them under various headings: Fiction, Drama, Poetry, History, Religion, Evolution, Ethics, Philosophy, Sociology, Economics and so forth. There may be certain domains of literature which make a special appeal to a person, and others in which he may not be interested at all. He

can thus easily select his department and pursue his reading according to his special taste and interest.

Third, besides the list of best, outstanding or fundamental books, the author has, in each department, given an additional list of *good* books, so that the reader who may wish to devote himself intensively to a certain domain of literature may easily do so. Every book either recommended or deliberately excluded—with the reason for the exclusion presented—has been read by the author, who has been, as stated, an intensive reader since his early childhood and who has devoted the last five years to reading and writing exclusively.

Fourth, and most important: The difference in the scope and character of the books. One may be well-read in belles lettres, one may possess an intimate familiarity with the classics, one may be able to quote beautiful lyrics, one may know long passages of Sharkespeare and of the Divine Comedy by heart, and yet be—an ignorant, narrow-minded, intolerant man. One may be a classical scholar, and yet entertain ideas about the universe, religion, ethics, war, social and international relations, the origin and development of man, etc., that would be suitable for a Hottentot or a Bushman. We have known such people. Such a phenomenon would be impossible after a perusal of the books recommended in this Guide; not even of all the books, but of the principal ones.

Genius can not be infused into an ordinary brain. Even talents are natural gifts which can be increased and strengthened but cannot be created *de novo.* But

intelligence *can* be developed; can be developed as surely as the body can; fine, rational thoughts can be implanted into any not utterly corrupted and demoralized brain. And we venture to claim that a reading of the outstanding books recommended in this volume will develop in any person of average intelligence a broad outlook, a clear vision, a noble sympathy. His intelligence will become of a superior, more analytical quality, and he will be a better man and a more useful citizen. He will be more valuable to his immediate environment, to the country of which he is a member and to humanity at large. And this is the greatest service that literature can render: there is no greater.

We need to be reminded every day, how many are the books of inimitable glory, which, with all our eagerness after reading, we have never taken in our hands. It will astonish most of us to find how much of our very industry is given to the books which leave no mark, how often we take in the litter of the printing press, whilst a crown of gold and rubies is offered us in vain.—*Frederic Harrison.*

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PART I

THE WORLD'S BEST BOOKS

Chapter I

ON THE MAKING OF LISTS OF BEST BOOKS

Several attempts have been made to compile lists of best books; some limit the number to ten, but most compilations go up to the conventional but favorite number of one hundred. Such attempts though often unsatisfactory are none the less quite legitimate and even laudable. The number of books in all domains of literature is now so enormous, and a vast proportion of them is so mediocre, worthless or worse than worthless, that it is perfectly proper for the millions who are not literary specialists to seek for some guidance in the uncharted sea of letters.

And such attempts at compiling lists of the world's best books are certain to become more frequent, and for two reasons: First, the incessantly and rapidly growing number of books makes such selections more welcome; second, the number of people, young, middle-aged and elderly people, both men and women, having both the leisure and the eagerness to read, is constantly growing.

A word about the middle-aged and the elderly. They

have seldom been taken into consideration. The average duration of life is gradually but constantly increasing. In former years, after a man became independent, so that he could, if he wanted to, devote himself to self-culture, he did not have many years left to do it in. Now conditions are different. There are a great many more men, in all classes (even among the working classes, for the hours are universally shorter than they were fifty or even twenty years ago), with some leisure to read and to study, and the years in which to employ the leisure are more in number.

And so in spite of the fact that the youth of our land, and of most other lands, is showing itself rather inclined to frivolity and futility and aimlessness, we look forward to a constantly growing demand for serious and decent reading, for a constantly widening field for *good* literature. And with the demand for *good* literature, there will be an increasing demand for guide-posts, for lists of best books.

He who feeds on literary offal, on the popular magazines, does not care to be guided; he takes what happens to be near at hand, or what is most silly and salacious and, to him, most amusing. But, fortunately for the true progress of mankind, there are men and women who expect from literature something more than mere amusement. Baseball, a game of cards, dancing, are perfectly legitimate pastimes; but nobody will seriously claim that they "give" us anything more than temporary, ephemeral diversion. Of literature we expect and have a right to expect something more; and it is for those who expect something more from

literature than mere amusement that this book is written.

I know that some *litterateurs* have a different ideal of literature. Thus, Mr. John Cowper Powys who has compiled a list of One Hundred Best Books says:

"Our 'One Hundred Best Books' need not be yours, nor yours ours; the essential thing is that in this brief interval between darkness and darkness, which we call our life, we should be thrillingly and passionately amused; innocently, if so it can be arranged—and what better than books lends itself to that?—and harmlessly, too, let us hope, God help us, but at any rate, amused, for the only unpardonable sin is the sin of taking this passing world too gravely."

We disagree utterly with Mr. Powys. The essential thing in our life is not that we should be thrillingly and passionately amused, amused at any rate; and the unpardonable sin is not the sin of taking the world too gravely, but of taking it too flippantly, too frivolously, too thoughtlessly. Of men and women who take the world in this manner there are, alas! too many; we need some men and women who are able and willing to consider the world and its problems earnestly, gravely, though of course not too gravely.

My idea of Literature rather coincides with that of John Stuart Mill, who speaks disparagingly of Hume, for while his mind was completely enslaved by a taste for literature, it was "not those kinds of literature which teach mankind to know the causes of their happiness and misery, that they may seek the one and avoid the other; but that literature which without

regard for truth or utility, seeks only to excite emotion." Which will, of course, cause a sneer in some of our art-for-art's-sake devotees. Literature, misery, happiness! What has literature to do with human misery or happiness? Let me say this: literature which has *not* to do with human misery and happiness is not worth the paper that it consumes.

Of the lists of "best books," some of course are better than others. But, I am forced to say, that not one have I found satisfactory—or, if the full truth must be told, even half satisfactory. Some of them are, in this writer's humble opinion, simply silly.

Here, for instance, is one list of The Ten Best Books.

1—Gospel of St. John. 2—St. Paul's Epistles. 3—The Imitation of Christ, Thomas à Kempis. 4—Confessions of St. Augustine. 5—Sesame and Lilies, Ruskin. 6—The Tempest, Shakespeare. 7—Henry V, Shakespeare. 8—Kipling's Poems. 9—A Tale of Two Cities, Dickens. 10—Life of the Bee, Maeterlinck.

In such a case, it is not merely a matter of taste; it shows ignorance, narrow-mindedness, a one-sided obscurantist bringing up. To give the above as a list of the World's Best Ten Books! And yet that list, imbecile as it may appear to some, won the first prize in a Daily Chronicle contest. Of 4000 replies received, this was considered by the sapient judges the best! The two next best lists, those that won the second and third prizes are respectively as follows:

1—The Bible. 2—Shakespeare's Plays. 3—Plato's Death of Socrates. 4—Dante's Divina Commedia. 5—

J. G. Green's History of the English People. 6—Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. 7—Quiller-Couch's Oxford Book of English Verse. 8—Browning's Poems. 9—Tennyson's Poems. 10—Ruskin's Modern Painters.

1—The New Testament. 2—The Imitation of Christ. 3—The Iliad. 4—The Divine Comedy. 5—Chaucer's Poems. 6—The Tempest, Shakespeare. 7—Don Quixote, Cervantes. 8—Life of Johnson, Boswell. 9—J. R. Green's History of the English People. 10—David Copperfield, Dickens.

It seems to us that one of the reasons for the unsatisfactoriness of many lists is to be sought in the lack of courage, spontaneity, or to put it more strongly, honesty in the compiler. Some people think that they *must* put certain books on their lists, because they are accepted as classics, because they are universally considered the greatest books. Thus, for instance, everybody considers it his duty to include the Bible and Shakespeare in a list of the world's best books, even though he may have read but a fragment or two of the former, and only one or two plays of the latter—and may not remember a line of either the one or the other.

Another reason is just of the opposite character: the compiler tries to be original, sensational or shocking, and so he leaves out some of the world's real masterpieces and includes works of the second, third or fifth rank. The first errs by following the crowd too slavishly, the second by trying to appear over-iconoclastic.

A third reason is to be found in the narrow range

of the compiler's reading. Some compilers give poor selections and leave out the best, simply because they do not know any better. They have read but little, they may be familiar with the literature of one language only, and their list is necessarily a mediocre one.

Another reason will be found in the theologic, superstitious mentality of the compiler—as illustrated in the list which won the first prize in the Daily Chronicle contest. A man who is still in the grip of superstition or of religious dogma cannot be expected to present us with a list of really valuable books.

Still another reason why many of the lists are so unsatisfactory is because the word "best" without any qualification has really but little meaning. To give it a meaning we ought to be able to answer: Best for what? Best for whom? Best from what point of view? Best without any qualification has little or no significance.

The List of the World's Best and most interesting Books herewith presented is we believe free from the defects just enumerated. It does not include the names of any books just because it is "the thing" to mention them; for many of the classics that served humanity well in the past are of but little value to us now; they are of interest only as historical documents. Furthermore, in omitting certain books which are considered "standard," "classic," or "indispensable," we give a reason for our omission. Of course, it is understood that the choice is our personal choice, and we could not include any book that we considered valueless or unnecessary, merely because the majority—or a former majority—had stamped it as great or indispensable.

Nor on the other end have we from a desire at being original excluded some of the world's masterpieces of eternal value, substituting for them obscure and practically unknown or forgotten literary productions. Works that have been forgotten have generally well merited their oblivion. As there are few unrecognized geniuses *at the present time,* so there are no unrecognized or unjustly forgotten literary masterpieces. The error is invariably in the other direction; we are more apt, particularly in our days of superabundance of leisure and money—in some quarters—to sing paeans to mediocre or valueless things than to overlook works of real worth.

A further discussion of lists of "Best Books" will be found in Part II.

BEST FOR WHAT?

We now come to the question of "best" which we wish to emphasize. Best for what? Best for making better men and women, men and women with broader vision, with wider outlooks, with deeper sympathy; *best* for making this world a *better* place to live in. For this is the chief, the primary purpose of all literature. If literature cannot contribute to make life finer, nobler, better, it is worthless. *Vita sine literis mors est.* If life without literature is death, literature without life is death also. Literature must not only be true to life, but it must *serve* life or, we repeat, it is worthless, or, at most, good only as a toy to amuse grown-up children.

This, added to the sum total of human happiness,

is the primary purpose of all literature, of all good books. One other qualification books must have: they must be *interesting*. For the best book, if it is dull, defeats its purpose: it will not be read. It is futile to recommend good, valuable or even epoch-making books, if they will not be read.

And so this volume comprises the world's best and most interesting books from the world's principal literatures. A perusal or study of these books will give any intelligent, eager man and woman the essence of culture, and will make him or her an enlightened *world* citizen. If culture is "to know the best that has been thought and said in the world" (Arnold) and if it "implies the possession of an ideal and the habit of critically estimating the value of things" (Huxley) then the sub-title of this book, A Guide to Self-Culture, is unquestionably justified. For the books recommended in this volume unquestionably contain the best that has been thought and said in this world and a perusal of them cannot fail to develop the critical faculty and to implant high ideals in the reader.

Chapter II

FICTION

If we are devoting what may be considered an unduly large space to Fiction, it is because in the domain of fiction guidance and suggestion are most frequently sought. The field of fiction is an immense one and it is growing in extent daily, hourly. Here the reader is lost, without some guide-post. And it is very important that the taste for good literature be developed from as early a period as possible. The way to save our youth from reading trash is not to forbid it, to make it inaccessible, but to put into its hands the world's good books from the earliest moment. A taste for good literature once developed, the reading of cheap, meretricious, shoddy literature becomes impossible.

Another reason for our devoting so much space to fiction is the importance which we ascribe to that department of literature; its influence on character and conduct is quite incalculable. An incomparably greater number of men, women and children are nourished on fiction than on any other literary fruit, and the influence of this reading, for good or evil, is tremendous. And its influence as a social force, as a factor in international and inter-racial relations, is not to be underestimated. To offer some guidance in the field

of fiction, particularly that division of it known as the novel, is therefore of prime importance.

* * *

It is some twenty-five years since we first read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. We were overwhelmed, overwhelmed by its charm, by its beauty, by its truth, by its scope, by its grandeur. It was with deep regret that we saw the last volume coming to an end. We wanted it to go on and on. When we finished the last page, we felt as if we were taking leave of some dear friends. We had then concluded that *War and Peace* was by far the greatest novel that had ever been written or at least that we had ever read. A quarter of a century has passed since. During that period we have read about a thousand novels—and our conclusion remains unchanged: *War and Peace* is the world's greatest novel. It is in a class by itself. Its panorama of human life is the most wonderful that has ever been unrolled. The people *live:* you become acquainted with them, they become your friends, and you take leave of them regretfully, as you regret parting from friends in flesh and blood. *And you feel a better man for having known them. A very important point!*

For a long time *War and Peace* has served us as a touchstone. If one has not read the book we are sorry and advise him to read it; but if one has read it or tried to read it and says that he found it dull or that it did not appeal to him, then we know that that man has no very highly developed literary taste, and that his culture as far as belles-lettres are concerned is neither very wide nor very deep.

It is true that the stupid, slavishly literal way in which the Russian proper names—which are different from those in any other nation—are translated, acts as a deterrent for foreigners and for Anglo-Saxons in particular; but this is an obstacle which can be easily overcome with a little patience, and should not deprive the serious, intelligent reader of some of the world's great masterpieces.

But while we mark *War and Peace* as in a class by itself, we do not advise to *begin* one's novel reading with that book. It being the best it may be left for the last, i.e. for the last of those enumerated in our lists.

The novel next in greatness to *War and Peace* is, strange to say, also by a Russian writer, Feodor Dostoyevsky. There is no question that Dostoyevsky is the greatest psychological novelist that has ever lived. Here and there W. B. Maxwell approaches him, but nobody has yet equaled him. His psychological insight is positively uncanny. He looks into and sees clearly the deepest recesses of the human heart. He lays, what is called, the soul bare and he reads it like an open book. He has written many novels, each one a masterpiece in its way, but the only one that in our opinion *should* be read, is *Crime and Punishment*. In his later years Dostoyevsky became more and more morbid, and also more and more obscurantist and reactionary, and his novels, while possessing tremendous gripping power, dealing as they do with abnormal individuals, leave a horrible impression on one's mind—or to use the common expression, a terribly bad taste in one's mouth. For instance, no stronger novel has been

written in any language than his "The Possessed," and yet we should not advise anybody to read it, except the specialist in belles-lettres.

And so next to Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* we put *Crime and Punishment* by Feodor Dostoyevsky. The list of the ten best novels follows herewith:

A

1—War and Peace, Leo Tolstoy.
2—Crime and Punishment, Feodor Dostoyevsky.
3—Growth of the Soil, Knut Hamsun.
4—The Last of the Vikings, Johan Bojer.
5—The World of William Clissold, H. G. Wells.
6—An American Tragedy, Theodore Dreiser.
7—Of Human Bondage, W. Somerset Maugham.
8—Oil! Upton Sinclair.
9—The Magic Mountain, Thomas Mann.
10—Power (or Jew Süss), Lion Feuchtwanger.

With the exception of the first two books, which stand by themselves and which must be given in any list of great novels, no matter how small the number, all the other works mentioned are of recent date. If the number were obligatorily limited to ten, the above would be our choice. But the field of pure fiction is so large that it is quite impossible to limit the number to ten. There are certain older books or classics which cannot be left out; not because they are classics, but because they are really great books and are indispensable to an all-round culture. We therefore present such a supplementary list.

B

1—Don Quixote, Miguel Cervantes.
2—The Vicar of Wakefield, Oliver Goldsmith.
3—Tom Jones, Henry Fielding.
4—Tristram Shandy, Laurence Sterne.
5—Les Misérables, Victor Hugo.
6—The Three Musketeers, Alexandre Dumas.
7—The Cloister and the Hearth, Charles Reade.
8—David Copperfield, Charles Dickens.
9—Fathers and Sons, Ivan Turgenev.
10—The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne.
11—The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howells.
12—Moby Dick, Herman Melville.

The above two lists containing twenty-two novels by twenty-two separate authors will give one a solid foundation in the literature of fiction. And if one is obliged to limit his reading of fiction, he cannot, we believe, make a better choice. They represent the best product of six literatures: English, American, German, Scandinavian, French and Spanish. But the field of fiction is so enormous, that it is difficult to limit oneself to just twenty-two volumes. It would be a gratuitous self-sacrifice. We therefore present an additional miscellaneous list. They are all good, worth-while books. Not a trashy one among them. But before doing so, we wish to make some comment on some of the books of the preceding list:

Don Quixote belongs to the small category of indispensable books. It is hard to imagine a cultured man

who has not read Cervantes' immortal work. For the pleasure that the book has given to millions of people, young and old, Cervantes deserves to be counted among the benefactors of the human race. And the generally prevalent opinion that Cervantes wrote Don Quixote as a satire against medieval chivalry, which was given the *coup de grace* by his work, is quite wrong. When Cervantes wrote Don Quixote, medieval "chivalry" had been dead for a century or more. No, Don Quixote was more than that: It was a subtly disguised panorama of the life of Spain in the sixteenth century. As Fitzmaurice Kelly says:

Nobles, knights, poets, courtly gentlemen, priests, traders, farmers, barbers, muleteers, scullions, and convicts; accomplished ladies, impassioned damsels, Moorish beauties, simple-hearted country-girls and kindly kitchen-wenches of questionable morals—all these are presented with the genial fidelity which comes of sympathetic insight. The immediate vogue of Don Quixote was due chiefly to its variety of incident, to its wealth of comedy bordering on farce, and perhaps, also, to its keen thrusts at eminent contemporaries. Its reticent pathos, its large humanity, and its penetrating criticisms of life were less speedily appreciated.

The Vicar of Wakefield needs no explanation. It is its own best explanation.

Les Misérables. We know it is not customary to recommend Victor Hugo's novels any more. They are not true to life, they are romantic, extravagant, etc. All true. Yet we should pity one who has not read Les Misérables and has not followed the fortunes of Fan-

tine and of Jean Valjean. If you read it as a story not of what has been but of what might be, if you are forewarned that you are not dealing with reality but with romance, you can derive deep and prolonged enjoyment from the book.

We are told that such a bishop as is depicted in Les Misérables never existed and never will exist. Perhaps. But don't you wish that he did? Would it not be wonderful to have such men—now and then? And why hasn't a writer the right to picture an ideal man, such as one should like to exist, the same as we describe utopias, the world of the future as we like to imagine it?

And in all literature there is nothing to compare with the description of the spiritual struggle that takes place in Jean Valjean when he is about to give himself up, give up his peace, his comfort, his Mayor's dignity, and to go back to the galleys, in order to save a falsely accused beggar. And the dramatic moment when he, the respected mayor and benefactor of the town, enters the dock to become a convict! It is a sad but at the same time a sublime chapter. Yes, it would be wrong to miss Les Misérables. And that the effect of Les Misérables is a beneficial one, of this there can be no doubt. Its deep sympathy with suffering humanity, its sublime idealism, cannot fail and does not fail to exert an ennobling, elevating influence on young and old alike.

The Three Musketeers cannot of course lay claim to be genuine high class literature. And yet that class of romantic swashbuckling melodrama must not be al-

together excluded from our field of reading. One good example of it we must have, and The Three Musketeers is undoubtedly the supreme example of its kind. The sequels to it—Twenty Years After and Le Vicomte de Bragelonne—are, like all sequels, inferior to the primary book, but still can be read with interest, especially if you are young, or what is the same thing, if you have preserved a young spirit in an old body.

The Rise of Silas Lapham is not only William Dean Howells's best novel, it is one of the finest realistic, true-to-life novels in any language. It pictures a certain class and a certain phase of American life as no other novel does.

Fathers and Sons, by Turgenev, must be read not only for itself, but in order to understand a certain historical epoch of Russian life. The hero of the book, Bazarov, is the forerunner of Russia's revolutionary heroes.

Moby Dick. When you have read Melville's masterpiece you will understand why we have included it among the great novels.

Additional List of Novels

Candide. Voltaire.

Gulliver's Travels. Dean Swift.

Wilhelm Meister, The Sorrows of Werther. Goethe.

Toilers of the Sea, Ninety Three, Notre Dame. Victor Hugo.

Lisa, Virgin Soil. Ivan Turgenev.

The Rest Cure, The Devil's Garden. W. B. Maxwell.

Vanity Fair, Henry Esmond. Thackeray.

The Story of an African Farm. Olive Schreiner.

Told by an Idiot, Orphan Island. Rose Macaulay.

The Wonderful Visit, The Dream, Men like Gods, Meanwhile, Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island. H. G. Wells.

The Genius, Sister Carrie. Theodore Dreiser.

Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, Prince and Pauper, The Mysterious Stranger. Mark Twain.

Anna Karenina, Resurrection. Leo Tolstoy.

The Jungle. Upton Sinclair.

Main Street, Babbitt. Sinclair Lewis.

My Antonia, Death Comes to the Archbishop. Willa Cather.

The Call of the Wild, The Sea Wolf. Jack London.

Girls, The Show-Boat. Edna Ferber.

Mr. Fortune's Maggot. Sylvia Townsend Warner.

Time and Thomas Waring. Morley Roberts.

The Moon and Sixpence. W. Somerset Maugham.

Conrad in Quest of his Youth. Leonard Merrick.

No. 5 John Street. Richard Whiteing.

The South Wind. Norman Douglas.

The Private Life of Helen of Troy, Galahad. John Erskine.

The Island Within (The Defeated), The Case of Mr. Crump. Ludwig Lewisohn.

Sorrell and Son. Warwick Deeping.

Sweepings. Lester Cohen.

Giants in the Earth. O. E. Rolvåg.

The Pit. Frank Norris.

The Philosopher's Stone. J. A. Larsen.

The Soil, Germinal, Doctor Pascal. Emile Zola.

The Road to Freedom. Arthur Schnitzler.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Thomas Hardy.

Daniel Deronda. George Eliot.

The Green Mansions. W. H. Hudson.

Looking Backward. Edward Bellamy.

News from Nowhere. William Morris.

Trilby. Du Maurier.

Erewohn, Erewohn Revisited, The Way of all Flesh. Samuel Butler.

Sentimental Tommy, Tommy and Grizel. J. M. Barrie.

Jean Christophe. Romain Rolland.

Dead Souls. Gogol.

Insulted and Injured. Dostoyevsky.

Monte Cristo. Alexandre Dumas.

Lord Jim. Joseph Conrad.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, by Anita Loos. This is a light trifling story, yet as presenting a mirror of present-day American society, it is worth while reading. And its humor is in some spots genuinely entertaining. Her But Gentlemen Marry Brunettes is a weaker performance.

The Rise of David Levinsky. A. Cahan.

A Foregone Conclusion. William Dean Howells.

British Barbarians, The Woman who Did. Grant Allen.

Cecilia Noel. Lanoe Falconer.

THE SHORT STORY

Though as much fiction as the novel, it has become customary to put the short story in a class by

itself. It is claimed that it is more difficult to write a great short story than it is to write a great novel. It may be so. The fact is that there are fewer great short stories than there are great novels. Our favorite are the following three:

Without Benefit of Clergy, by Rudyard Kipling. A genuine masterpiece.

The Necklace, by Guy de Maupassant. We do not belong to Maupassant's admirers. His writings leave, generally, a bad taste in our mouth. We know that the admiration of Maupassant is on the part of many genuine and sincere, but on the other hand we also know that the boosting of his writings is often meretricious, with pecuniary profit in view. However his *Necklace,* though the stones in it were paste, is a genuine little gem, and must occupy a foremost place in any list of great short stories.

Our third short-story favorite is Marjorie Daw, by Thomas Bailey Aldrich. Though the first two are greater stories from a literary point of view, it is Marjorie Daw that afforded us the greatest enjoyment. It is a sweet little story.

Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant, Gauthier, and Zola

It will surprise some that, devoting considerable space to fiction, and emphasizing its importance, we have left out of our list such great masters—masters unquestionably—as Flaubert, Balzac, Maupassant and Gauthier. Naturally we do not put those authors on the Index. We put no books, even the vilest, most venal

and most meretricious (such as the novels of the ignoble Louis Dumur) on the Index. Those who wish to read those and any other books may do it without fear of excommunication. But any list of books, even the broadest and most catholic, will, in fiction and poetry particularly, always remain a personal, a subjective choice. Flaubert, Balzac and the others we have enumerated simply do not appeal to us, or no longer appeal to us, and as they make no appeal to us, we cannot conscientiously recommend them to others. To write fully why the Flaubert-Balzac school does not appeal to us would require an essay. Briefly stated, the several reasons are as follows: They are *too old;* the people pictured by them seem so remote from us as if they had lived centuries and centuries back; such people exist no longer; conditions have changed, and the people's mentality has changed; they are too old and yet not old enough to make them interesting. The coldness, the objectivity, the lack of sympathy with which those authors describe the people and the events, qualities admired by some readers, who consider the authors great just because of them, are to us obnoxious. We like an author to show where his sympathies lie, though of course he does not have to do it grossly as it is done in melodrama. He can do it very subtly, by the merest hint, and towards the end of the book. And then, last but not least, those writers had no social vision, and, it seems to us, had no sympathy with the people and its aspirations.

This last point will also serve as an explanation why leaving out Flaubert, Balzac, and Maupassant we

have included Emile Zola. The reason is obvious: Zola, while as great a realist as the authors mentioned, and, in our opinion, as great an artist, was a man with a social vision and with great sympathy for the "injured and insulted." He didn't live in an ivory tower, and injustice did not leave him calm. That he was a man of high principles, he showed very plainly in the Dreyfus affair, when he stood up against the infamous military-clerical plotters, and at the risk of his reputation, his liberty and his life took up the cudgels for an innocent man. The highest courage is shown by men not on the battlefield but in fighting for an unpopular cause.

As to Maupassant, nobody will grudge him the title of Master Short Story Writer, but the people and the incidents which these stories depict are so trifling, so piffling to use an unconventional term, that there is nothing left in the mind after you get through with them. Nothing whatever. And it is our well-considered opinion that Maupassant may very well be left on the shelf without any loss either to one's mind or one's esthetic enjoyment.

Anatole France

Anatole France was a most charming, witty and brilliant writer; but he was not a deep thinker, and his outlook on life and the future of humanity was vague and somewhat confused. By his humanitarian, compassionate, even though somewhat detached, attitude towards past history and current events he has exerted a beneficial influence on two generations. And

though this influence is now waning, and though some of his books are getting old, others are still worth reading. Of course the full beauty of his style can be appreciated only in the original, but the translations are good, and the esthetic pleasure is but slightly diminished.

The Opinions of Jerome Coignard, M. Bergeret in Paris, The Rotisserie of Queen Pédauque, The Penguins' Island, and Crainquebille are the books that in our opinion are best worth reading. The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard by which Anatole France became first known to the world of letters is more of a book for children than for adults. My Friend's Book, Pierre Nozière and Life in Bloom make pleasant reading, but that is all. They are rather lightweight.

Children's Books for Adults

There are certain books which one hesitates to recommend to adult people—for whom this book is intended. They are considered children's books. Yet if one has not read them in childhood, one would sin grievously against the muse of belles-lettres if he failed to read them. They are books for all ages from seven to seventy, and beyond.

First of all, is the immortal Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe. It is a book that appeals not only to all ages, but to all races; the Old Arab in the desert reads it with the same pleasure that is derived from its pages and illustrations by a little urchin in New York, London, Paris, Berlin or Leningrad. Next come the precious, whimsical Alice in Wonderland and Through

a Looking Glass by Lewis Carroll. We pity the man whatever his age who can derive no enjoyment from those two masterpieces of nonsense. The Arabian Nights cannot be omitted altogether, nor can Andersen's Fairy Tales, and the tales of the Grimm Brothers. And of Fenimore Cooper we must read at least one book, The Last of the Mohicans.

No matter how old you may be chronologically, if some of the spirit of youth is still fermenting in your veins, you will enjoy the above books as much, or almost as much, as does a youngster in the first decade of his earthly existence. To the same category may be added J. M. Barrie's whimsical Peter and Wendy. One might include Scott's Ivanhoe in this category, but to read Ivanhoe, one has to be really young; young not only in spirit but in years. It is difficult to read the book for one who knows that it is historically false; that the so-called medieval chivalry was a vicious fraud, and that the whole picture of the alleged life of the Middle Ages is distorted and contrary to fact.

Chapter III

THE DRAMA

Without any qualifications whatsoever, *Faust* is the greatest drama that human genius has ever conceived. None of the dramatic works of Æschylus, Euripides and Sophocles, nothing that has come from the pens of dramatists since Shakespeare to our day can stand comparison with Faust. Faust towers so majestically over them that they become almost pitifully small. Faust alone has more social vision, more "humanity," more intellectual interest, more moral problems, more pathos in it, than all the dramas of Shakespeare combined.

George Henry Lewes, one of our clearest thinkers, and author of the best life of Goethe, says of Faust:

It appeals to all minds with the irresistible fascination of an eternal problem, and with the charm of endless variety. It has every element: wit, pathos, wisdom, farce, mystery, melody, reverence, doubt, magic, and irony: not a chord of the lyre is unstrung, not a fiber of the heart untouched.

There is not a play that Shakespeare wrote of which this could be truthfully said.

Like *War and Peace* in the field of novels, so *Faust* in the field of drama is to be put in a class by itself, marked A.

It is not an easy matter to make a choice of ten best plays. There are so many plays of equal merit, that it is hard to choose just ten and proclaim them the best. But if forced to limit ourselves to ten, the following would be our choice:

The Ten (exclusive of Faust) best Plays:

A—Faust. Goethe.
1—Prometheus Bound. Æschylus.
2—Œpidus Rex. Sophocles.
3—Alcestis. Euripides.
4—Hamlet. Shakespeare.
5—Midsummer Night's Dream. Shakespeare.
6—Iphigenie. Racine.
7—Tartuffe. Molière.
8—Wallenstein. Schiller.
9—Peer Gynt. Ibsen.
10—Game of Love and Death. Romain Rolland.

An additional list would be as follows:

Agamemnon, Æschylus, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, The Tempest, Shakespeare. Faustus, Marlowe. Nathan the Wise, Lessing. Count Egmont, Goethe. Wilhelm Tell, The Maid of Orleans, Schiller. The Weavers, Hauptmann. Night Lodging, Gorky. Widowers' Houses, The Devil's Disciple, The Showing up of Blanco Posnet, Shaw. The Inspector-General, Gogol. The Master Builder, Ibsen. Cyrano de Bergerac, Rostand.

Chapter IV

POETRY

Poetry is the perfume of literature. In its best specimens it is capable of giving us supreme pleasure. But at its very best it is less important, less significant, less *necessary* than prose. Poetry primarily expresses the emotions and primarily appeals to the senses and the emotions. Prose primarily, though not exclusively, appeals to the intellect, to our reasoning faculties. And in order to enlighten people, to broaden their minds, to teach them to reason logically, to make them see the connection between cause and effect, in order to uproot superstition, to propagate the findings of science, including social science and ethics, in short, in order to make better men and women, and this world a better place to live in (the primary purpose of literature), we must make use of prose; poetry will not serve. It follows, therefore, that in comparison with prose, poetry is but an insignificant part of literature.

Another point: poetry can never be strictly "honest," i.e. it can never, or only very seldom, express the thought, if thought there be in poetry—which is not always the case—that the author wished to express. In prose, if we possess a fair vocabulary, we can express the exact thought that we wish to convey; we can choose any word we wish in order to present the exact

shade of our meaning. The sound, the cadence is of no importance. In poetry, we are handicapped by the meter, rhyme or rhythm, and we are forced to select a word which does not express exactly what we meant to express, but which answers the requirements of versification. And what ridiculous, meaningless or false words are often chosen!

Poetry possesses another handicap of which prose is free. Prose can be translated into any language, and if done by a competent translator, is just as satisfactory as the original. We possess now many translations which are so perfectly done that it would be difficult to say that they are translations. We know of translations which while conveying the exact thought of the originals are superior to the latter in style. So that when one writes in prose he writes for the entire literate world. Not so with poetry. It is very, very rarely that poetry can be translated satisfactorily; it is generally distorted; often it is no more than a caricature of the original. If the translator is at the same time a poet, he may give us a satisfactory rendering; it is then however not a translation, but an adaptation. This is the case, for instance, with Edward Fitzgerald's rendering of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. As all there is to some poetry is its verbal music, and as this is lost in the translation, what is left, is just—nothing. A narrative poem can be translated, for even if the music is lost, to a greater or lesser extent, the narrative remains. But a completely satisfactory translation of lyric poetry hardly exists. And you will look in vain for *adequate* translations of the lyrics of Hugo,

Musset, or of the world's greatest lyric poet, Heinrich Heine. So that in poetry everybody is limited to his own language or to the languages that he is familiar with.

Considering, as we do, poetry as the less important part of literature, we do not consider it advisable to recommend certain individual poets like Byron, Shelley, Keats, Burns, etc., in their entirety. The best thing to do is to take an anthology of verse, such as Quiller-Couch's Oxford Book of English Verse, and read, off and on, what seems to appeal most to the reader. For American poetry, Stedman's Anthology will do; if one is interested in the latest effusions of our poets, he will find all that is worth while—and much that isn't—in *Modern American Poetry,* A Critical Anthology edited by Louis Untermeyer.

Burton Stevenson's Anthology of Verse is the most complete of any—it has over 4000 pages, and is rather expensive; but those who can afford it, should procure it, and by reading every day a poem or two, marking those that appeal to them specially for future re-reading, they will have all the poetry they need.

What concerns free verse poetry, it is our humble opinion that the greater part of it may be left alone, without any loss. Neither as to subject matter, nor as to rhyme, rhythm, or cadence has there appeared any work of outstanding excellence; we cannot think of one which would take its place among the immortal works of the great poets of yore.

In no department of literature is *taste* such an important factor as it is in Poetry. A poem that may thrill

one person, may leave the next one quite cold. And our conviction is that to give a list of the best in poetry is more or less futile. But for completeness' sake we give our personal choice, though we do this not without some hesitation and doubt.

* * *

SOME WORTH WHILE ENGLISH POEMS, *alphabetically arranged by their authors' names*

Matthew Arnold—Longing.

Richard Barnfield—The Nightingale.

William Cullen Bryant—Thanatopsis.

Lord Byron—She walks in Beauty! Elegy; All for Love; Maid of Athens; The Prisoner of Chillon; Childe Harold.

Edward Adams Cantrell—If I Must Go Down at Last.

H. E. Clough—Say not the Struggle Naught Availeth.

Dr. S. Solis Cohen—And Love Passed By.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge—The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.

Dr. William Colby Cooper—Irene.

William Cowper—The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk.

George Eliot—Oh, May I Join the Choir Invisible.

Ralph Waldo Emerson—Give all for Love; Good Bye.

Eugene Field—Little Boy Blue.

Edward Fitzgerald—Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

Sam Walter Foss—The Calf-Path.

Thomas Gray—Elegy.

Thomas Hardy—I Scattered Seed on a Barren Plain.

John Hay—Woman's Love.

William Ernest Henley—Invictus (Out of the Night that Covers me).

Thomas Hood—The Bridge of Sighs; The Song of the Shirt.

Leigh Hunt—Abou Ben Adhem.

John James Ingalls—Opportunity.

John Keats—Ode to a Nightingale.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow—The Psalm of Life; The Slave's Dream; Children; The Blacksmith; The Arrow and the Song; The Day is Done; Evangeline.

Walter Malone—Opportunity.

Edwin Markham—The Man with the Hoe.

Edgar Lee Masters—Spoon River Anthology.

John Milton—Samson Agonistes; Lycidas; On the Late Massacre in Piedmont.

William Morris—A Time will Come.

John G. Neihardt—Battle-Cry; When I am Dead; Let me Live out my Years.

Edgar Allan Poe—The Raven; The Belle; Israfel; Annabel Lee.

Christina Georgina Rossetti—Up-Hill.

Robert Haven Schauffler—Scum of the Earth.

Walter Scott—Lochinvar.

William Shakespeare—Venus and Adonis, A Madrigal; Sonnets eighteen, thirty-three, fifty-seven, and one hundred and sixteen.

Percy Bysshe Shelley—Invocation; To a Skylark; Adonaïs; Prometheus Unbound.

Philip Sidney—Song (Doubt you to whom my Muse).

Robert Louis Stevenson—Romance.

Arthur Symons—The Return.

Bayard Taylor—Bedouin Song.

Sara Teasdale—The Return.

Algernon Charles Swinburne—Songs before Sunrise.

Alfred Tennyson—Locksley Hall.

The Charge of the Light Brigade should be read as a horrible example, an example of the ignoble fatuity to which poetry may sometimes descend. The idea of glorifying soldiers for throwing themselves into the jaws of death though they knew that somebody had blundered and that they were sacrificed uselessly! The soldiers would have deserved praise if they had rebelled and refused to budge. Those ignoble lines: "Theirs not to make reply, theirs not to reason why, theirs but to do and die," have been responsible for a great deal of mischief. But the warmakers and the generals gloat over them.

Walt Whitman—Pioneers! O Pioneers! O Captain, My Captain. Some portions of The Leaves of Grass are excellent, others are pure echolalia.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox—Her Last Letter; The Way of the World; The Disappointed.

Oscar Wilde—The Ballad of Reading Gaol.

The above list is, we believe, fairly representative of English and American poetry. We have still a few words to say about Greek and Roman poetry, and about the poetry of modern languages. It is considered as imperative for anyone possessing a fairly well-rounded culture to be familiar with the Iliad and the Odyssey as it is for a religious Christian to know the Bible or for a Moslem to know the Koran. And in truth it would be a pity not to have some familiarity

with those two immortal products of the Greek genius. As an escape from reality, as a release from pressing problems, there is nothing finer than the Iliad and the Odyssey. But we see no necessity for reading every one of the twenty-four books of the Iliad and the twenty-four books of the Odyssey—unless one wants to. To gain a familiarity with those two works, it is sufficient to read two or three books (or Cantos) of the Iliad in, say, Lord Derby's translation, two or three books in Pope's translation (it is a pleasurable occupation to compare the two) and the rest in synoptical form. The same with the Odyssey—three or four books in Cowper's blank verse translation, two or three books in the prose translation of Butcher and Land, and the rest in synopsis. This is of course meant for adult readers, whose time is not unlimited, whose self-education has started fairly late, and who have much to catch up with.

What concerns the Greek Drama we have given our choice in the Section on Drama.

As to Latin poetry, Rome has had three great poets: Virgil, Horace and Ovid. But they have very little substantial to give us, and the loss of omitting Latin poetry, as well as Latin prose, altogether, is not very great. For the sake of entertainment one may read a part of Virgil's Aeneid, some of his Bucolics and Georgics, some of Ovid's Elegies, and a few of Horace's Odes and Satires.

As to French and German poetry, the highest examples of the lyric art are quite untranslatable; all attempts to translate the lyric poetry of Hugo, Musset,

Goethe, Schiller, Heine, have for the most part been flat failures: the very essence of the poem, its soul, is lost. As we stated in the beginning of this section, lyric poetry can be fully enjoyed in the original only. And they who wish this enjoyment must acquire the mastery of those languages. It has long been our opinion that every truly cultured man should possess at least these three languages: English, French and German, and if possible, Latin. At least, some Latin.

In conclusion, a few more words about *modern* poetry. It would be a mistake to carry away the impression that poetry is altogether dead, that nothing beautiful and delicate issues to-day from the lyre of the muse of poetry. Here is a beautiful thing by the Irish poet signing himself A.E.

Be Not so Desolate

Be not so desolate
Because thy dreams have flown,
And the hall of the heart is empty
And silent as stone,
As age left by children
Sad and alone.

Those delicate children,
Thy dreams, still endure:
All pure and lovely things
Wend to the Pure.
Sigh not: unto the fold
Their way was sure.

Thy gentlest dreams, thy frailest,
Even those that were
Born and lost in a heart-beat,
Shall meet thee there.
They are become immortal
In shining air.

The unattainable beauty
The thought of which was pain,
That flickered in eyes and on lips
And vanished again:
That fugitive beauty
Thou shalt attain.

Some things by Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg are original and fine.

On the other hand there are things published and called poems and poetry that are of such an inconceivably stupid, outrageous character that it is difficult to decide what their authors are: insane, or brazen charlatans. To apply the name of poetry to some of the unintelligible drivel that claims to be poetry would be blasphemy. The rhymed product of some of the disordered minds confined in lunatic asylums is by far better and more intelligible than what is offered to the public by some so-called poets.

That we may not be suspected of exaggeration we here present one or two specimens of the modern "poetry."

Here is a poem (!) by Gertrude Stein, transcribed verbatim et literatim. And it is not by any means her worst one.

SUSIE ASADO.

Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado.
Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.
Susie Asado.
Susie Asado which is a told tray sure.
A lean on the shoe this means slips slips hers.
When the ancient light grey is clean it is yellow, it is a silver seller.
This is a please this is a please there are the saids to jelly. These are the wets these say the sets to leave a crown to Incy.
Incy is short for incubus.
A pot. A pot is a beginning of a rare bit of trees. Trees tremble, the old vats are in bobbles, bobbles which shade and shove and render clear, render clean must.
Drink pups.
Drink pups drink pups lease a sash hold, see it shine and a bobolink has pins. It shows a nail.
What is a nail. A nail is unison.
Sweet sweet sweet sweet sweet tea.

The following "poem" is by e. e. cummings [sic] and is taken from his volume entitled "is 5." Yes, that is the title exactly: "is 5." What it signifies, the author may know, though we doubt it.

voices to voices, lip to lip
i swear (to noone everyone) constitutes
undying; or whatever this and that petal confutes . . .
to exist being a peculiar form of sleep

what's beyond logic happens beneath will;
nor can these moments be translated: i say

that even after April
by God there is no excuse for May

—bring forth your flowers and machinery: sculpture and prose
flowers guess and miss
machinery is the more accurate, yes
it delivers the goods, Heaven knows; etc., etc.

We were going to transcribe it all, but it is too long and the first three stanzas will suffice.

Here is another one of his "poems," in its entirety, and transcribed with literal exactness, arrangement, parentheses, punctuation, capitals and all. It is taken from the same volume of poems, page 55.

Life hurl my
yes, crumbles hand (ful released conarefetti) ev eryflitter, inga, where
mil(lions of aflickf) litter ing brightmillion of S hurl; edindodg:ing
whom are Eyes shy-dodge is bright cruMbshandful, quick-hurl edinwho
Is flittercrumbs, fluttercrimbs are floatfallin,g; allwhere:
a:crimbflitteringish is arefloatsis ingfallall!mil, shy mil-brightlions
my(hurl flicker handful
in) dodging are shybrigHteyes is crum bs (alll) if,eyEs

On looking at the above monstrosity, we were sure that the author was in the last stages of general paralysis of the insane, though we have never seen anything written by a patient in a lunatic asylum quite so nau-

seatingly rotten. But then we learned that the author is the same E. E. Cummings who wrote The Enormous Room, a strong book which we had read with great interest. And therefore there is no alternative left to us but to say: brazen, impudent, degenerate charlatanism. We can find no other explanation.

If we seem to devote too much space to modern "poetry," it is because we detest charlatanism wherever manifested, and much of the modern poetry is nothing but a brazen manifestation of charlatanism by dishonest, incompetent scribblers, who have no other means of attracting attention; and it is time that this be said loudly and unequivocally. The public, we know, is a flock of sheep, very suggestible, very hypnotizable, and when it reads on the jacket of the volume of poems that "E. E. Cummings has won ranking among the foremost living poets," that he is "a writer of recognized genius, mature and flawless workmanship," that he has "a sensuous command of words *unequaled* in modern literature," etc., etc., it, the public, is apt to swallow it all, and, really to take Mr. Cummings with his irrational borborygmi for a poet. It is therefore necessary that somebody tell the same public that this is far from being the universally accepted opinion.

Of course, we have nothing against Miss Stein or Mr. Cummings personally; we have taken them merely as types. And what we have said about them applies to all "poets" of that ilk who merely mock the public, and whose poetry is an insult to common sense and to literary honesty.

Chapter V

HISTORY

If a man eager to acquire genuine culture *had* to limit his study to but one department of literature, that department would have to be History. While one *may* get along without fiction—and there are some very cultured and broad-minded men who claim never to read, never to have read any novels—it is difficult to see how one can get along without history, how one can lay claim to culture who does not know how we came to be what we are, socially, politically and economically. For one thing, it shows such a lack of intellectual curiosity, as to betoken a sluggish, uninteresting mind.

When we refer to history, we are not thinking of details of battles, the anniversaries of the birth and marriages of the kings, their amatory adventures and scandals. But in order to understand why the human race is in such desperate straits as it is, why the cruellest and the stupidest thing that one can conceive of, namely—War—is still considered by such a large number of people inevitable and even necessary and beneficial, why there is still so much ignorance, superstition and barbarity, one must know history; if the majority of the people knew the *true* history of the human race,

and could interpret its lessons properly, progress would be incomparably more rapid than it has been in the past. For history can teach us valuable lessons, *and only in so far as it can teach us lessons is history valuable.* For the value of history, as of literature in general, lies in its *service* to humanity; history is valuable because a proper study of the past may help us to avoid tragic blunders in the future. If history could not help us towards a happier future, it would be simply interesting, as a fairy tale—perhaps a tale told by an idiot—is "interesting"; it would not be valuable.

We spoke of the *true* history of the human race. For unfortunately, not all history is true history. A good deal of the history, and the most important kind of history because it is taught to the impressionable minds, the pupils in schools and colleges, is *not true;* some of it is not true because of the ignorance of the teachers, some of it is *viciously* false, *deliberately* perverted by the authors of histories. For most historians, particularly those that write text-books, are infected with the toxin of spurious patriotism, known as chauvinism or jingoism, and in the quarrels or wars between their nation and another nation, they invariably present their nation in the right and the other nation in the wrong. It is always one's own nation that had justice on its side, it is always one's own nation that fought a merely defensive war, and that carried off most victories; it is always the enemy that violated international law and conducted the war with barbarous cruelty, and invariably the defeats of one's own nation are minimized and the victories mag-

nified, and vice versa as regards the "enemy" nation. The result of this perverted and dishonest teaching is a bumptious, puffed-up chauvinism, which makes each nation believe that it can lick the rest of the world, or at least that it is the salt of the earth, and which spreads and fans international hatred and contempt and prepares the soil for the greatest of all crimes—war. It is not such history that we have reference to when we speak of the paramount importance of history in the life of a person who considers himself a responsible, intelligent human being. Rather than to imbibe such history, it is better to know no history at all.

Fortunately, there have arisen of late historians who are conscious of their high mission, and who are trying to present historical events in their true light. They know that a chauvinistic, superpatriotic historian is a *criminal* because he sows the seeds of discord and war, and they write with impartiality regarding their own as well as other nations.

If we were limited to but a single book, our choice would be either The Outline of History, by H. G. Wells, or The Conquest and the Ordeal of Civilization, by Breasted and Robinson.

In recommending Wells' Outline or Breasted and Robinson's General History, we do not wish to give the impression that we consider those histories perfect. A perfect general history does not yet exist. Somebody may write such a history; let us hope, in the near future; for the present we have to be satisfied with the second best. The authors above mentioned, though

clearer-visioned and more honest than most text-book writers still pay undue homage to convention and tradition, and still hesitate to call things by their right names. They still fear to offend the prejudices and susceptibilities of the unthinking majority, and because of this only a feeble light is thrown on some of the events in medieval history. But, as said, those elementary histories are the best we have, and as a general survey they are excellent.

But there will be many who, after having read one of the above histories, will have their appetites for historical knowledge whetted, and to those we can recommend the following:

A Short History of the English People, by John Richard Green.

The French Revolution, by Thomas Carlyle.

American History, by David Saville Muzzey.

The Genesis of the World War, and In Quest of Truth and Justice, by Harry Elmer Barnes.

It is half a century since Green's Short History of the English People was published and no other book has been written that approaches it. Green's Short History of the English People is the best of any histories of a single nation. It is a masterpiece in the fullest sense of the word. If we had one such world history, we would need no other.

Carlyle's French Revolution is considered inaccurate in many details. And yet it is the greatest history of the French Revolution that has ever been writen. It is an immortal piece of work. The writer of these lines has read many histories of the French Revolution,

some much more exhaustive, more historically correct, and yet none, none without exception, gives such a vivid picture of those troubled times, saturates one so thoroughly with the spirit of the Revolution, so that we seem to be living in it, as does Carlyle's French Revolution. Read as many more histories of the French Revolution as you wish, but do not miss Carlyle. If not read as history, it can be read as a magnificent poem.

For a one-volume history of the United States, Muzzey's is probably the most satisfactory.

Prof. Barnes' book The Genesis of the World War is simply indispensable for anyone who wishes to know the truth about the origin of the World War and the responsibilities for it. There was so much brazen perversion of the truth, so much deliberate lying about the origin and the conduct of the War, that every honest man who desires to know the *facts* must read this book. There is no other on the subject so complete, one that considers the matter from all angles. I put Barnes' book among the indispensable books on history, because I consider a knowledge of the origin of and responsibility for the World War of paramount importance. It is necessary that people know how they are lied to when a war breaks out, how they are misled about the origins and purposes of war, etc. If we are to avoid wars in the future, we must know how and why, on what insignificant or sinister pretexts, wars have been started in the past. It is a most terrible thing to contemplate that the lives of millions and millions were sacrificed because of the criminal wicked-

ness and inexcusable stupidity of half a dozen rulers and diplomats, and it is only by *knowing* the facts that a similar catastrophe may be avoided in the future.

* * * *

Few people will be satisfied to stop with the books enumerated above. Fortunately for those who have the leisure and prefer to devote it or the greater part of it to History, there are some excellent works, treating history from the modern and human point of view. There are also some classics, which can be read with pleasure, both for the instruction they impart, and as literature.

Below is a list of such books.

The Rise of American Civilization, by Charles A. and Mary Beard.

Origins of the World War, by Sidney B. Fay.

Flick's Modern World History.

The Trend of History, by W. K. Wallace.

Henderson's History of Germany.

Gibbon's The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

History of Greece, by Grote or by Prof. J. B. Bury.

Ranke's History of the Popes.

Motley's The Rise of the Dutch Republic.

Bryce's Holy Roman Empire.

Buckle's History of Civilization in England.

History of the Inquisition in Spain, by Charles Henry Lea.

The above list will keep one fairly well occupied for

several years, but at the end of the period he will know some history, and he will understand, more or less, why we are what we are. It may seem too much to demand of anyone not a student of history to peruse in their entirety the last seven works recommended—Gibbon alone is in seven volumes, Grote twelve; in all they make some thirty-five fairly bulky volumes. It probably is. Those who cannot afford the time, should limit themselves to a few chapters in each one of the works mentioned. It is only by reading the great historians, that one can comprehend what history means, and how history should be written. Not to read at least one or two volumes of Gibbon, a volume of Grote, a few chapters in Ranke, etc., is to deprive oneself of great intellectual pleasure, and knowledge.

Charles Henry Lea has spent a lifetime in searching and studying the original documents relating to the Inquisition and he has given to the world the results of his studies in eleven monumental volumes, which are a marvel of exactitude and erudition. By his work he has earned well of mankind and has built himself a monument more permanent than brass. One can spend his time a great deal more unprofitably than by reading Lea's finely written and marvelously documented volumes. But those who cannot afford the time should read at least the first 230 pages of Volume III of the History of the Inquisition in Spain. But the more of Lea one reads the better. It is important to know something of the horrible misery, suffering, torture and deaths that religion has been responsible for, to know to what base hypocrisy, devilish cunning, and

sadistic cruelty pious priests and professors of religion can descend.

One more book we must mention before concluding this department. It is a book *about* history and historians. The book is: History and Historians of the Nineteenth Century, by G. P. Gooch. The appraisement of the historians is masterly and the style is smooth and flowing. Having started the volume it is difficult not to finish it.

Those who think they *must* read the classics, will spend some pleasant weeks with Herodotus, Thucidides, Livy and Tacitus. But this is distinctly a luxury, not a necessity. The historical reliability, particularly of the two latter, is questionable and they can teach us nothing of any importance.

Chapter VI

BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Biography constitutes an important part of literature, and has been gaining greatly of late in value and significance. Some biographies and autobiographies are of great value from the point of view of individual psychology, showing us the development of a human soul; such for instance is the autobiography of John Stuart Mill, one of the finest and sincerest human documents ever written. Others throw a light on the period in which the person lived: such are Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography and Pepys' Diary. We sometimes get a better insight into the life of a period from a biography or an autobiography than we can from a formal history.

As the best autobiographies we consider the following:

1—Autobiography. Benvenuto Cellini.
2—Autobiography. Benjamin Franklin.
3—Confessions. J. J. Rousseau.
4—Autobiography. John Stuart Mill.
5—Personal Memoirs. U. S. Grant.
6—Recollections. John Morley.
7—An admirable book partaking of both biography and autobiography is The Life and Letters of Charles

Darwin, including an autobiographical chapter, edited by his son Francis Darwin. It is full of interest and gives us an excellent picture of one of the finest products, intellectually and morally, of the nineteenth century. It is in two volumes, of over 1100 pages, but it is easy, pleasurable reading and is decidedly worth while.

Among the best biographies our choice is:

8—The Life of Goethe. George Henry Lewes.
9—Voltaire. John Morley.
10—Rousseau. John Morley.
11—Diderot and the Encyclopedists. John Morley.
12—Napoleon. Emil Ludwig.
13—Bismarck. Emil Ludwig.
14—Boss Tweed. Denis Tilden Lynch.

Spencer's Autobiography is valuable, but it is too large and too detailed. The same may be said of Gibbon's Autobiography: It is too self-conscious.

Morley's Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot are remarkable pieces of work. The author gives us not only the salient facts of the lives of those three important men, the men themselves and their work become to us like open books. One feels that Morley knew his subject in its innermost details. No matter how many biographies of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopedists may be written, Morley's masterpieces will never be outdated.

And speaking of John Morley; I should like to state that in the entire range of literature, there is no author with whom one can commune more usefully and more

pleasurably than with John Morley. One feels in reading him than one has to do with a MAN, a man of good faith, a man who writes with a deep sense of responsibility, with a thorough knowledge of his subject, a man who does not write for effect, a man who will not sacrifice the truth for a bon mot or an epigram, in short a man who besides being a man good and true is also an ideal writer. Better the twelve volumes of John Morley than 120 volumes of some inferior writers, inferior both as to knowledge and as to *good faith*—an indispensable quality in a writer.

Boss Tweed is interesting not because the "hero" of the book is of any interest; he was a common thief and grafter; the book is of value because of the light it throws on a certain period in New York history, because it shows to what depths rulers of cities and municipal corruption can sink; and also because it shows us that we have made progress. Corruption from city government has not yet disappeared entirely, but such things as were possible in the 70s and 80s of the last century would be quite impossible now.

Small biographies of great people are many in number and of those we can recommend the following:

John Stuart Mill. By Alexander Bain.

Heinrich Heine. By William Sharp.

Friedrich Schiller. By Henry W. Nevinson.

Life of Charles Darwin. By G. T. Bettany, or by Leonard Huxley.

Thomas Henry Huxley. By Leonard Huxley.

George Eliot. By Oscar Browning.

Life of John Milton. By Richard Garnett.

Life of Dante. By J. Knight.

A most excellent volume on Darwin by Henshaw Ward has recently been published. It is entitled: Charles Darwin, The Man and His Warfare. It is the best of all books published so far on the life and work of that truly great man.

Chapter VII

ETHICS, RELIGION, EVOLUTION

One may be a successful business man, a great industrialist, an eminent professional man, a skillful surgeon, a world-known artist-musician, painter or sculptor—or even a popular writer, and yet if he has no decently intelligent world-outlook, if the great problems which have agitated thinking and feeling men for centuries do not exist for him, or if his ideas about the progress and the welfare of the human race are vague, muddled or even, as is unfortunately not rarely the case, savage, cruel, one might say, cannibalistic, then that man is no man; not a complete man; and great as his value may be in certain directions, in general it is vastly diminished; it may be so counterbalanced by his false ideas as to become nil or less than nil.

It is therefore not only important but indispensable for every man, whatever his special domain of activity, to acquire an intelligent, truthful outlook on the world and its problems, problems both spiritual and material.

Ethics

The best book on ethics from the modern rationalist point of view is Max Nordau's Ethics and the Evolution of Man. It is clear, free from any mysticism, rev-

elation or categorical imperatives, and shows as plainly as can be that morality has nothing to do with religion, that one can be an unequivocal freethinker and a profoundly moral man at the same time—and vice versa.

The best book, from the more conventional but yet liberal standpoint is A System of Ethics by Friedrich Paulsen, Professor of Philosophy in the University of Berlin, edited and translated by Prof. Frank Thilly, of the University of Missouri. A splendid piece of work.

These two books cover the ground fully. But for supplementary reading, and for those having plenty of leisure time the following are recommended.

Data of Ethics. By Herbert Spencer.

Evolution and Ethics. By T. H. Huxley.

Utilitarianism. By John Stuart Mill.

An Ethical Philosophy of Life. By Felix Adler.

Outline of the History of Ethics. By Henry Sidgwick.

Ethics. By Peter Kropotkin.

The last book mentioned was the last book from the pen of this great and good man.

To advise the reading of Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Kant, etc., is in our opinion not only unwise but *unfair*. The style is difficult, involved, abstruse, the reader gets very little substance out of hours and hours of reading, and he is apt to get repelled by the whole subject of Ethics. But Ethics written from the modern rational standpoint is one of the most fascinating disciplines.

Religion

As a first book to begin with, our choice has for some years been A History of Freedom of Thought, by J. B. Bury, Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University, author of History of Greece, History of the Eastern Roman Empire, History of the Later Roman Empire, etc. It is a delightful book. It is small, extremely readable, written in a gentle noncombative style, and there is charm and instruction on every page. Everyone to whom we recommend the book is enchanted with it, and some love to reread it.

The next book of our choice is the Martyrdom of Man, by Winwood Reade, a genius, who perished alas, at too early an age.

A third useful volume is History of the Conflict between Religion and Science, by Prof. John William Draper.

The number of books for supplementary reading is large, and of that number we select and recommend the following:

A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology, by Prof. Andrew D. White.

The Varieties of Religious Experience, by Prof. William James. (Charmingly written as is everything written by that master of clear lucid exposition.)

The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe, by W. E. H. Lecky.

A Short History of Christianity, by J. M. Robertson. A very clear and impartial narrative.

As this book is intended for adults, it is assumed that the reader has in his youth become familiar with the "sacred writings" of his religion whatever the religion may happen to be. But there are those who may wish to get some idea of the sacred writings of other religions besides their own. To advise to read the sacred writings of the various religions in their entirety would not be fair; it would consume too much time, and the result would be insignificant. *Some* idea of the thoughts and injunctions of the world's religious leaders and founders we must have, and for this purpose selections are quite sufficient.

The volumes of sacred writings, which constitute volumes 44 and 45 of The Harvard Classics contain as wise a selection as any that could be made, and it is those two volumes that we recommend.

Those two volumes, of 1020 pages, contain: The Sayings of Confucius, The Book of Job, The Book of Psalms, Ecclesiastes (the most interesting thing in the whole Bible), The Gospel according to Luke, the Acts of the Apostles, The First and Second Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Hymns of the Christian Church, Buddhist Writings, The Hindu Bhagavad-Gita, and Chapters from the Koran.

As stated before we consider the above selections from the sacred writings of the world's principal religions amply sufficient for any cultured man.

Some Additional Books on Religion

An Approach to the Psychology of Religion, by Prof. J. Cyril Flower.

Christianity, Past and Present, by Prof. Charles Guigenbert, of the University of Paris.

The Birth and Growth of Religion, by George Foote Moore.

Comparative Religion and the Religion of the Future, by A. W. Martin.

Three Essays on Religion, by John Stuart Mill.

Christianity and Conduct, or the Influence of Religious Beliefs on Morals, by Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner.

The Christian Hell, from the First to the Twentieth Century, by Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner.

The Evolution of the Idea of God, by Grant Allen.

The World's Living Religions. By R. E. Hume.

Ingersoll's Lectures and Essays. For beauty of style Ingersoll's writings are unequaled. To read him is like listening to enchanting music.

Why I am not a Christian, by Bertrand Russell.

A Religion of Truth, Justice and Peace, by Isidor Singer.

The Principles of Christianity, by the Rev. A. B. Sharpe.

This last book presents the subject of religion and Christianity from the strictly orthodox Catholic viewpoint. But the author *argues,* or *tries* to *argue,* and does not vituperate or threaten with the eternal torments of hell. It is an excellent little book for those who wish to have a clear orthodox presentation of the subject; it is most curious to see how the author struggles with the problem of evil—the hardest nut for theologians to crack—how he tries to reconcile an all-loving, all-

merciful God, with the terrible misery, sin and crime that exist in this world.

Evolution

To live in the twentieth century and to know nothing of Evolution—it is difficult to imagine it. And yet there are multitudes who know nothing whatever about this great subject which has truly revolutionized our entire world outlook. And these multitudes are not only among the ignorant and illiterate masses, they are found also among people who consider themselves cultured, educated and civilized. Well, in whatever light these people may consider themselves, they do not live in the twentieth century; they live in the middle ages.

A familiarity with the outstanding principles, with the fundamental theses at least, of evolution, is important for two reasons: it is the basis of all biological sciences, and gives the student a sane outlook on the deepest problems of life. A person who has assimilated the principles of evolution cannot very well be a superstitious believer in myths and fables. We know that there are exceptions: The human brain seems to be divided into logic-tight compartments, and a man perfectly rational in one domain of thought and knowledge can still be most irrational and uncritical in other directions. Yet, these are the exceptions, and the rule is that one who is familiar with the principles of Evolution will think more clearly and more logically on all other subjects.

Our choice of books on evolution is as follows:

The Riddle of the Universe. Ernest Haeckel.

The Evolution of Man. Ernest Haeckel.

Of course, one may read Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species and Descent of Man. Unfortunately we found that many people find these two books rather heavy and difficult to read. We therefore put Haeckel's two charming books into first place. For further reading the following are recommended:

The Story of Creation. Edward Clodd.

Man's Place in Nature. Thomas Henry Huxley.

Huxley's selected Lectures and Essays.

Evolution. Profs. J. A. Thomson and P. Geddes.

Evolution for John Doe. Henshaw Ward.

These last two are excellent; and those who have but very limited time, may rest content with one or the other. If we were to limit ourselves to one book, it is Henshaw Ward that we would select.

Chapter VIII

ECONOMICS: SOCIALISM, COMMUNISM, CO-OPERATION

Capital, by Karl Marx, was an epoch-making book. It is the work of a great plodding genius. But it would be futile and fatuous to recommend it to the ordinary reader, or even to the reader above the ordinary, who does not make a special study of socialism. The book is heavy, prolix and extremely dull. You can lead a person to a book but you can't make him read it. I therefore recommend a small book entitled: The Essentials of Marx, edited with an Introduction by Algernon Lee, and published by the Vanguard Press, New York.

An excellent popular and all-embracing book is A History of Socialist Thought, by Harry W. Laidler. It considers socialism, syndicalism, communism, bolshevism, etc., and each chapter has a good bibliography.

The best little book on Communism is one by Prof. Harold J. Laski, entitled *Communism*. It is a small book published by the Home University Library, and is remarkable for its lucid and impartial exposition of the subject.

Two other small books on Socialism that will appeal to the general reader are The Socialist Movement by J. Ramsay Macdonald (Home University Library) and Basic Principles of Scientific Socialism by A. S. Sachs (The Vanguard Press, New York).

The best little book on Coöperation is What is Co-operation? by Dr. J. P. Warbasse (Vanguard Press, New York).

Adam Smith's THE WEALTH OF NATIONS was an epoch-making book, when it appeared, and has had a great influence on the development of political economy. And those who like to be familiar with all epoch-making books should of course read the Wealth of Nations. But we do not consider it among the indispensable books of the present day.

Similarly, An Essay on Population by Thomas Robert Malthus was epoch-making. It was the precursor of the modern movement for limitation of offspring which has already proved an inestimable blessing to many civilized people and which will yet, when sufficiently spread, save the race from poverty, much ill-health and miscellaneous misery and, indirectly, from the greatest of all human scourges, War. And he who wishes to specialize in the important subject of population control should read Malthus' original Essay. But the average reader for whom, as stated, this book is written, will get all the arguments he needs from a modern volume on Birth Control; while as far as *practical* information is concerned the latter will prove incomparably more useful than the pioneer treatise by Malthus, whose *practical* measures are worthless because impossible of application in practice.

Additional Books for General Enlightenment

There are several books of a general character which we cannot refrain from including in our list.

Some of them are classics, the others are of recent vintage. But they are chockful of ideas and make delightful reading. They are:

UTOPIA, by Thomas More. This volume by More who fell a victim to the cruel bloodlust of one of the foulest of kings, Henry VIII, should be in the library of every civilized person. It is Thomas More who invented that valuable word, Utopia, and Utopia will continue to agitate the heads and hearts of thinking and feeling mn and women until Utopia becomes a reality. It is the first book which gives a picture of some real worth-while commonwealth. The former attempts, like Plato's Republic, and St. Augustine's City of God, are pale, we are tempted to say, worthless performances; and so are several subsequent imitations—Bacon's New Atlantis, Campanella's City of the Sun and Harrington's Oceana.—Only when we come to Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward, and William Morris's News from Nowhere do we meet with well-thought-out and civilized Utopias.

The next two classics in this list are:

THE RIGHTS OF MAN, by Thomas Paine. It is a small book; it is not quite outdated yet and is decidedly worth-while reading.

ON LIBERTY, by John Stuart Mill. A careful reading of this splendid defense of liberty is perhaps of greater importance now than ever before—now when tyrants of the type of Mussolini openly boast of their trampling underfoot the "decaying corpse of liberty," and when even radicals of a certain type are beginning to claim that liberty doesn't matter much, in fact that

liberty—freedom of speech, press and association—is a bourgeois conception, and that we can get along without it.

An additional half a dozen excellent books broadening and enlightening.

Not Guilty. By Robert Blatchford.

The Mind in the Making. By James Harvey Robinson.

Tolerance. By Hendrik W. Van Loon.

Roads to Freedom. By Bertrand Russell.

The Right to be Happy. By Dora Russell.

Bertrand Russell's book deals with the ways of reaching social freedom. Mrs. Russell discusses the means of attaining individual happiness, and considers sexual freedom one of the factors of happiness.

The Open Conspiracy. By H. G. Wells.

Chapter IX

PHILOSOPHY

The predecessors and contemporaries of Socrates, who engaged in endless talk which they mistook for thought, called themselves Sophoi or wise men; Socrates, more modest, called himself by a more modest word which he coined—*philosopher,* which means only a lover of wisdom, a searcher for knowledge. Before science raised its head and began to come into its own, philosophy or what passed for philosophy occupied the stage. Really endless reams of paper were blackened, first in script and, after Gutenberg, in printed characters, with philosophical disquisitions on abstruse and generally useless subjects. And though we may shock the reader by the statement, we cannot refrain from declaring our conviction that if all the so-called purely philosophical writings, from Plato down to the last century, were destroyed, the loss would be slight. Again, we do not deny that the philosophers played their part in the development of human thought, and the historian of philosophy must read their works; but the general reader will get very little for his time and effort.

Not only were the ideas of the philosophers down to the middle of the 18th century embryonic in character, not only was the style heavy, abstruse, involved,

but they were timid, afraid; afraid, in the literal sense of the word, *afraid of their lives* and, what was much worse yet, *of torture,* cruel, inhuman torture at the hands of cruel inhuman monsters who tried to crush the expression of every thought which differed from any thought that they considered orthodox. The result was that those who could not resist the inner urge and felt impelled to publish some of their thoughts to the world enveloped them so thickly in ambiguous sentences that only the very clever were able to read between the lines and make out what the writers were driving at. The obscurity of many passages in Descartes is due to this cause. And when he learned that Galileo was tortured (for Galileo *was* tortured) and condemned, he destroyed his treatise on *The World*. We do not blame him. The Inquisition's torture was too horrible a thing to risk it, even for the sake of enlightening mankind.

And of course, aside from the fear of the Church, the thinking of many of the philosophers of the middle ages was vitiated by their orthodox, superstitious theology, and later by an irrational deism or pantheism. For these reasons I say that we can get along very well without reading the philosophical writing of Plato, Aristotle, Epictetus, Thomas Aquinas (whom Dr. Will Durant in a moment of mental aberration—temporary we hope—classed among the world's ten greatest thinkers), Descartes, Bacon, Pascal, Spinoza, Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and even the saintly but somewhat *détraqué* Auguste Comte. Not only can we get along without them, but, to read them would be a

regrettable waste of time. Only a certain mental snobbishness of which we must learn to get free can advise the reading of the above books.

When we come to modern thinkers of whom the finest type in our opinion, is Bertrand Russell, the case is quite different. Their philosophy is human, it deals with human problems, and their language is clear and understandable.

But though we do not consider it necessary to go to the writings of the old philosophers because of their obscurity and antiquatedness, we must know something about them. We must know something about the pioneers who, though timidly and gropingly, tried to open the windows of the human mind.

For this purpose and also in order to know the general problems of philosophy, we recommend the following:

A History of Philosophy. By C. C. J. Webb.

The Problems of Philosophy. By Bertrand Russell.

Philosophy. By Bertrand Russell. This author's latest book on the subject.

A Biographical History of Philosophy. By George Henry Lewes.

The Story of Philosophy. By William J. Durant.

Lewes' Biographical History of Philosophy is one of the finest philosophical treatises ever written. It and Buckle's History of Civilization in England constituted our Bible during our teens. And our intellectual pleasure—it was the only pleasure we had—in reading these books was great.

As to Durant's book, we know the criticism leveled

against it: It is superficial, it is flippant, etc. Nevertheless it remains one of the best introductions into the subject, and as a history of the *philosophers* as human beings it remains unequaled. There is nothing to prevent the reader who is interested to go deeper into the subject if he wishes to.

Chapter X

PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Psychology is the science of the mind or of what is usually called the soul; all mental or psychic operations and phenomena, such as sensations, memories, ideas, emotions, perceptions, acts of the will, behavior, come within its scope. Psychology, as a branch of philosophy, has occupied many minds for many centuries, but it was a rather barren tree, yielding dry, juiceless fruit; and it is no exaggeration to say that during the past thirty or let us say fifty years, its modern developments, psychoanalysis and behaviorism, have given us a richer and more beneficent harvest, more practically useful results than all the previous centuries taken together.

The older introspective psychology gave us very little of value for the understanding of individual behavior or of social phenomena. Modern psychology has already yielded substantial results in education, in criminology, in medicine, and is helping us to solve many historical riddles for which we could find no solution before. Psychology in its broadest sense has become an indispensable adjunct of sociology, taking this word also in its broadest significance.

For pure psychology, William James' Psychology: briefer course, still remains the best book. For those

who can afford the time, his principles of Psychology in two volumes will be a delightful acquisition. Few psychologists, if any, have written so charmingly on psychology and philosophy as has William James, for many years Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University.

Psychoanalysis

It is claimed by a not-insignificant number of intelligent people that the influence of Sigmund Freud on the course of human thought will be equally as great as that of Charles Darwin; that psychoanalysis marks as significant an event in the spiritual progress of the race as did the theory of evolution. Frankly critical as we are of many of the errors of psychanalysis; strongly as we are opposed to many of its bizarreries and extravagances, we are inclined to agree with the above claim. In the history of the liberation of the human mind from ignorant error and intrenched superstition Freud's place will not be very far removed from that of Darwin.

"Know Thyself" has been on the lips of thousands of people since the time of Socrates. It had become a platitude, and a useless platitude at that, because nobody—or very few—knew what to do in order to know oneself; nobody knew how to go about it. The genius of Freud opened the gates into the mind. In spite of the excessive zeal and the exaggerations of some psychanalysts, we do know better than we did before how to explore the depths of the human mind, how to wrest from it secrets of which the bearer himself is perhaps

unaware or unconscious—secrets and sores the uncovering of which is *sometimes* of signal benefit to the patient. For psychanalysis is not only fascinatingly interesting as a mental discipline, but possesses definite, though limited therapeutic value. And every cultured layman should have a fair idea of psychanalysis—what it is and what it isn't.

Only a word of caution. Psychoanalysis has suffered a good deal from its overzealous friends and semi-educated followers. It has been misinterpreted, misapplied, and it has been made responsible for many absurdities which its original founder never intended (though he himself is not free from responsibility for a number of untenable notions). And, then again, because psychoanalysis is capable of curing or relieving certain psychic conditions, it has been seized upon by some shrewd but incompetent laymen as a system of medicine capable of yielding quick and easy financial returns. And some absurd books on psychanalysis have been written. Against all of which the earnest student is to be on his guard.

In this case, it is best to go to the original source. Freud's General Introduction to Psychoanalysis is not a difficult book, and its perusal will repay those who wish to have an authoritative idea of what psychoanalysis is.

A. B. Brill's Psychoanalysis is also a safe book.

But even those two books must be read critically, and all their conclusions need not be necessarily accepted. A particularly critical attitude must be maintained towards the psychoanalytic interpretation of

dreams, on which subject most extravagant nonsense has been written.*

The Freudian Wish by Holt is a very readable little volume. It might perhaps be taken first as an introduction to the subject.

We distinctly warn against the numerous books by Stekel, whose *bona fides* we have reason to doubt. The man is too imaginative and too extravagant.

About Ourselves, By Harry A. Overstreet. A very good popular exposition.

Behaviorism

The philosophies of Freud, Jung, Adler, etc., have opened up new vistas for the human mind. They have thrown light on many of the springs of human conduct. But they have shown themselves one-sided and, in many instances, extreme. The Behaviorist philosophy is a good corrective of psychanalysis and of the extreme hereditarians who ascribe too little significance to environment; and the modern cultured man should have some familiarity with it. Watson has been one of the most prominent behaviorists, and his Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist, is worth-while reading; though here also we are not obliged to accept all the author's conclusions. Just as the Eugenists or

* Here is not the place to criticize psychoanalysis, to state what we consider the fundamental truth of Freudism and what we consider its useless excrescences, but those interested may read a small book by the author of this volume entitled Psychoanalysis or The Freudian Philosophy: A Popular Exposition of its Truths and Errors.—And by the way the term Psychanalysis is etymologically more correct than Psychoanalysis, though we use the two terms indiscriminately.

Eugenicists ascribe too much influence to heredity, quite underestimating the importance of environment, so the Behaviorists go to the other extreme; to them environment is everything and heredity practically nothing.

Chapter XI

THE SCIENCES

To give a list of "best" books in the special, technical sciences seems rather futile. If one is a beginner, and has no knowledge at all of any of the sciences, such as chemistry, physics, physiology, biology, botany, zoölogy, geology, astronomy, etc., then any school or college text-book will answer his purpose. While some of the school text-books may not be brilliant, they are dependable, and they are invariably revised and kept up-to-date; and as science is making rapid progress, the latest editions of text-books should always be chosen. Certain sciences, like analytical and synthetic chemistry, experimental physics, anatomy, etc., cannot well be studied at home; laboratories and dissecting rooms are indispensable. For this reason we consider it superfluous to give the names of any books on the special sciences. But if one wishes a survey of science in general, he may get An Outline of Science by Prof. J. A. Thomson. It is not a masterpiece, but still as a general outline of science it is satisfactory. What applies to the sciences, applies also to mathematics: any school or college text-book on arithmetic, algebra, and geometry will answer the purpose satisfactorily.

In general, it may be said that the pure sciences, the disciplines which do not touch upon human relationships, relations between nation and nation, between capital and labor, studies that have nothing to do with human development, with morals or with religion, are taught satisfactorily in our colleges and universities. Mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, engineering, botany, zoölogy, etc., are in the hands of competent men and the text-books of those sciences are reliable. It is when it comes to history, religion, ethics, sociology and economics that the perversion begins; and it is here that we have to be careful and to keep shy, as a general thing, of officially approved or accepted manuals. The powers that be have no interest to lie about facts in chemistry or engineering; they *are* interested in conveying false notions when the question refers to war in general or to a certain specific war or to relations between capital and labor, to certain diplomatic acts of theirs, to theologic dogmas which have been exploded by science, etc., etc. For this reason, to repeat, while considering it superfluous to recommend books on the physical sciences, we deem it most important to indicate the necessary books in the spiritual domains—the domains of religion, ethics, sociology, economics and so forth.

Exploring the Universe, by Henshaw Ward, is a popular book by that clever and witty writer.

Science Remaking the World, by E. E. Slosson, is also a book which we can recommend.

Chapter XII

THE ARTS: MUSIC, PAINTING, SCULPTURE, ARCHITECTURE

About art or rather The Arts we know very little, though of course we know what we like and we know what we don't like. We do not like jazz—we detest it —and we do not like the modern daubs in painting and horrors in sculpture, known as futurist, cubist, impressionist, etc. Decidedly, in music, painting and sculpture, we prefer the old and the fairly old masters to the ultra-modern ones. But our judgments in these matters are purely subjective of course, and we could not explain the reasons for our predilections. We could not *prove* the correctness of our opinions, as we could in matters of history, ethics, sociology, psychology, etc. Our judgments must remain personal and subjective.

As stated we know very little about art; we have devoted but little time to it. But every intelligent man must know something about the four divisions of human activity known specifically as the Four Arts, and for that purpose a small booklet on each subject will suffice.

Music. Sir Harry Hadow has written a small book under the simple title *Music,* which gives a fair idea about the essence of that divine gift and about its greatest masters. It is an excellent little book written

with verve and spirit. At the end there is a bibliography intended specially for the general reader. The book forms one of the volumes of the Home University Library of Modern Knowledge. Of course if a man is a musician or is studying music he will need no layman's advice as to what books to procure. But another excellent book for the average lay reader, is the New Encyclopedia of Music and Musicians, by Waldo Selden Pratt. It gives an explanation of musical terms and contains brief biographical notes of some 7500 musicians, etc. Rupert Hughes' Music Lovers' Encyclopedia is also very good.

PAINTING. Mrs. C. Heaton's A Concise History of Painting is fairly satisfactory. Sir Frederick Wedmore's Painters and Painting is one of the volumes of the Home University Library, but is not as good as the other volumes in this collection. The style is most heavy.

Basari's Lives of Painters, Sculptors and Architects has become a classic, and is obtainable in several editions, some of them very bad. The edition by Blashfield and Hopkins (Scribner's) is the best, but also the most expensive. There are individual biographies of all the great artists of which two may be specially recommended: Michelangelo by Romain Rolland, and Leonardo da Vinci by Georg Gronau.

SCULPTURE. The general reader will do well to read Viardot's Wonders of Sculpture (translated from the French) and The History of Sculpture by E. A. Short.

ARCHITECTURE. That subject interested me the least and the only little book that I read on the subject is

by Prof. W. R. Lethaby. It is a satisfactory book for the general reader. For the history of architecture A History of Architecture by B. and B. F. Fletcher is to be recommended. John Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture is considered a great and indispensable book on the subject.

Chapter XIII

SEXOLOGY

For centuries sex was non-existent. Non-existent as a subject of study or of serious discussion. It was considered so shameful, so superfluous, so pernicious a thing that it was covered up, hidden, put into the deepest background. This is not the place to discuss the injury to the human race that has resulted from the deep ignorance in which men and women were kept regarding one of the two most important of our instincts, but the injury has been great, tremendous; the misery incalculable. One cannot ignore a vital instinct with impunity: the result is inevitably suffering, disease, perversion. Fortunately, a saner attitude is beginning to prevail in reference to the manifestations of the sex instinct. The veil is beginning to be lifted. And sex instruction, even for the young, is now being advocated in a number of civilized countries.

No man can consider himself truly cultured who has not read some outstanding books dealing with the anatomy, physiology, psychology and ethics of sex—in other words, no man is a truly broad-minded, educated man who has not some familiarity with modern sexology, or sexual science. One cannot demand that everybody specialize in the details of sexology, but a

general, elementary knowledge at least, is indispensable.

Neither personal experience, nor the reading of a thousand novels dealing with as many love situations, or of a thousand passionate love lyrics will give one the necessary sex knowledge. Sex knowledge is a science, and must be studied in books devoted to sexual science or Sexology.

The author is rather embarrassed in his recommendation of books on Sexology, for this subject has been his special field for a third of a century, and he has written what he considers fairly good books on the subject, particularly for beginners; but while there may be a difference of opinion as to high quality of *his* books, there are three books, as to whose supreme value there can be no two opinions.

Those three books are: The Sexual Life of our Time, by the late lamented Iwan Bloch, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Volume VI, which has the subtitle Sex in Relation to Society, by Havelock Ellis, and The Sexual Crisis, by Grete Meisel-Hess.

While several years old, Iwan Bloch's The Sexual Life of our Times is still unsurpassed, nay, unequaled. The ground covered in this single volume is enormous, and it is most readable throughout. Havelock Ellis is one of our foremost pioneers in the field of sexology, and his Studies in the Psychology of Sex were groundbreaking. However of the six volumes, it will be sufficient for the non-specialist to limit himself to Volume VI. The other five are not so important, and, besides, are now, in view of our present knowledge, somewhat

antiquated. The Sexual Crisis by Grete Meisel-Hess is a unique book. Written in a brilliant style, it is both passionate and profound. It can be read again and again, each time with growing appreciation. From the literary viewpoint, this is probably the best book, dealing with the sex question, in any language.

The above three volumes deal principally with the psychology and the ethics of our sex life. As elementary books, dealing with the anatomy and physiology of the sex organs, as well as with the questions of birth control, abortion, venereal disease, etc., the author's Sex Knowledge for Men, with a Program for the Sex Education of the Boy, and Woman: Her Sex and Love Life, will, we believe, be found quite satisfactory. The proper order to read the above mentioned five books would be as follows: 1. Sex Knowledge for Men. 2. Woman: Her Sex and Love Life. 3. Studies in the Psychology of Sex. 4. The Sexual Crisis. 5. The Sexual Life of our Time.

We believe that men should be familiar not only with their own but also with the sexual anatomy, physiology and pathology of women, and women with the sexual anatomy, physiology and pathology of men. It would avoid many misunderstandings, would obviate considerable unhappiness.

Because of the repressed sex life in most civilized countries, books dealing with the sexual question possess a special appeal for many people, and in response to that appeal a number of sex books of a deplorable character have made their appearance. Some show insufficient knowledge on the part of their authors, others

bear clearly the stamps of hypocrisy and meretriciousness. One should therefore be careful in selecting his books on sexology. More careful than in any other domain of knowledge. For in no other domain is false guidance apt to have such deplorable results.

Some Additional Books on Sexology and Eugenics

The Sexual Question, by Prof. August Forel, was one of the pioneer books on Sexology, and may still be read with profit. It is however somewhat "outdated," and the ground is more thoroughly covered by Bloch.

The Way Life Begins. B. C. and V. N. Cady.

The Sex Factor in Human Life. T. W. Galloway.

Being Well-Born. An Introduction to Eugenics. M. F. Guyer.

Heredity and Environment. E. G. Conklin.

Physiology of Reproduction. F. H. A. Marshall.

The Sexual Life of the Child. Albert Moll.

Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory. S. Freud.

The Revolt of Youth. By Judge Ben B. Lindsey.

The Companionate Marriage. By Judge Ben B. Lindsey and Wainright Evans.

Birth Control or The Limitation of Offspring by Prevenception. W. J. Robinson.

America's Sex and Marriage Problems. W. J. Robinson.

Chapter XIV

TWO CONDENSED LISTS

Among the three hundred books or so recommended in this Guide there is not one that is not worth while; not one that, without necessarily in each instance being an immortal classic, is not the best for the purpose recommended. And those who have the time will endeavor to read them all. But there are people whose leisure is limited; who are so situated economically or socially that with the best of will they can devote but little time to reading and study; and yet they are yearning for knowledge, for self-culture. And there is no reason why people who cannot acquire much knowledge should not acquire as much as they can. Some knowledge provided it is of the right kind, provided it is true and honest knowledge, is better than no knowledge at all.

Furthermore, there are some people whose basic education has been so neglected or whose mentality is of such modest caliber that certain books are beyond them. Here also there is no reason why because people cannot grasp profound treatises, they should not try and assimilate the lighter, more elementary books on the subject. The whole question turns on the quality of the books; the most important point in our entire program is to give the seeker after truth, education

and culture, the right outlook, the truthful viewpoint.

In order to satisfy these two demands, i.e. to guide the man who has but limited leisure as well as the one who has but modest mental abilities, we have compiled a special list of one hundred books. We have divided that list into two sections, A and B. A contains the most indispensable books. They constitute the minimum. Section B contains books of a deeper character, and are to be read by those who have already mastered Section A and feel the inclination to go deeper into the various subjects, to travel further on the road to self-culture.

Fiction

A

The Vicar of Wakefield. Goldsmith.
Don Quixote. Cervantes.
Les Misérables. Hugo.
The Three Musketeers. Dumas.
Cloister and the Hearth. Reade.
Scarlet Letter. Hawthorne.
David Copperfield. Dickens.
Moby Dick. Melville.
An American Tragedy. Dreiser.
Oil! Sinclair.
Robinson Crusoe. Defoe.
Alice in Wonderland. Carroll.

B

War and Peace. Tolstoy.
or

Anna Karenina. Tolstoy.
Crime and Punishment. Dostoyevsky.
Growth of the Soil. Hamsun.
The Last of the Vikings. Bojer.
The World of William Clissold. Wells.
Of Human Bondage. Maugham.
The Magic Mountain. Mann.
Power. Lion Feuchtwanger.
Tristram Shandy. Sterne.
Tom Jones. Fielding.
Gulliver's Travels. Swift.

The Drama

A

Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare.
Hamlet. Shakespeare.
Tartuffe. Molière.
Wallenstein. Schiller.
The Wild Duck. Ibsen.

B

Faust. Goethe.
Prometheus Bound. Æschylus.
Œdipus Rex. Sophocles.
Nathan the Wise. Lessing.
Peer Gynt. Ibsen.
The Three Unpleasant Plays. Shaw.
Three Plays for Puritans. Shaw.

History

A

An Outline of History. Wells.
A Short History of Ancient, Medieval and Modern Times. P. V. N. Myers.
Modern History. Hayes and Moon.
The Genesis of the World War. Barnes.
The Stream of History. Geoffrey Parsons.

B

A Short History of the English People. Green.
The Rise of American Civilization. Beard.
The History of Germany. Henderson.
The French Revolution. Carlyle.
The Great French Revolution. Kropotkin.
Modern World History. Flick.
Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Gibbon.
History of Greece. Bury.
The Rise of the Dutch Republic. Motley.
History of the Inquisition in Spain. Lea.
History of the Popes. Ranke.
History and Historians of the 19th Century. Gooch.

Biography and Autobiography

A

Autobiography. Benvenuto Cellini.
Autobiography. Benjamin Franklin.
Autobiography. John Stuart Mill.

Voltaire. John Morley.
Napoleon. Emil Ludwig.

B

Confessions. J. J. Rousseau.
Rousseau. John Morley.
Diderot and the Encyclopedists. John Morley.
The Life of Goethe. George Henry Lewes.
Bismarck. Emil Ludwig.
Life and Letters of Charles Darwin. Francis Darwin.
Heinrich Heine. William Sharp.

Ethics

A

A System of Ethics. Friedrich Paulsen.
Ethics and the Evolution of Man. Max Nordau.

B

Data of Ethics. Herbert Spencer.
Evolution and Ethics. T. H. Huxley.
Utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill.
Outline of the History of Ethics. Henry Sidgwick.
Ethics. Peter Kropotkin.

Religion

A

History of Freedom of Thought. J. B. Bury.
The Martyrdom of Man. Winwood Reade.

History of the Conflict between Religion and Science. John William Draper.

B

A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology. Andrew D. White.

A Short History of Christianity. J. M. Robertson.

The Varieties of Religious Experience. William James.

The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe. W. H. E. Lecky.

Ingersoll's Lectures and Essays.

Evolution

A

Evolution. J. A. Thomson and P. Geddes.

The Riddle of the Universe. Ernst Haeckel.

The Story of Creation. Edward Clodd.

Evolution for John Doe. Henshaw Ward.

B

The Evolution of Man. Ernest Haeckel.

Man's Place in Nature. Thomas Henry Huxley.

The Origin of Species. Charles Darwin.

Descent of Man. Charles Darwin.

The Kingdom of Man. Ray Lankaster.

Economics, Socialism, Communism, Coöperation

A

The Science of Wealth. J. A. Hobson.
Progress and Poverty. Henry George.
History of Socialist Thought. H. W. Laidler.
Communism. Harold Laski.
What is Coöperation? J. P. Warbasse.

B

Wealth of Nations. Adam Smith.

General Mind Broadening

The Rights of Man. Thomas Paine.
On Liberty. J. S. Mill.
Not Guilty. Robert Blatchford.
The Mind in the Making. J. H. Robinson.
Proposed Roads to Freedom. Bertrand Russell.
The Right to be Happy. Dora Russell.
The Open Conspiracy. H. G. Wells.
What I Believe. W. J. Robinson.

Philosophy

A

A History of Philosophy. C. C. J. Webb.
The Story of Philosophy. William J. Durant.

B

Philosophy. Bertrand Russell.

A Biographical History of Philosophy. George Henry Lewes.

Psychology and Psychoanalysis

Psychology: Briefer Course. William James.

General Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud.

Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist. J. B. Watson.

Sexology and Eugenics

A

The Way Life Begins. B. C. and V. M. Cady.

The Sex Factor in Human Life. T. W. Galloway.

Being Well-born. An Introduction to Eugenics. M. F. Guyer.

The Sexual Life of our Time. Iwan Bloch.

Companionate Marriage. Judge Ben B. Lindsey.

B

Physiology of Reproduction. F. H. A. Marshall.

The Sexual Crisis. G. Meisel-Hess.

Sex in Relation to Society. Havelock Ellis.

Three Contributions to the Sexual Theory. S. Freud.

The Sexual Life of the Child. A. Moll.

Heredity and Environment. E. G. Conklin.

Woman: Her Sex and Love Life, Sex Knowledge for Men, Birth Control or The Limitation of Offspring, Sex Morality, Past, Present and Future, by the present writer may also be recommended.

Chapter XV

THE TEN BEST BOOKS

The question is sometimes asked: If you had to go away to a lonely island (why an island; there are places on a continent just as secluded as an island) and wanted to take ten or a dozen books along, what books would you choose? In one respect, the question is a silly one. For if we know what to choose then it means that we had read the books; otherwise we would not know whether the books were good or not and whether or not they were worth choosing. And if we had read them, we would not perhaps care to take them along. For if we go to a lonely island or on a long trip, where books are unobtainable, then we want books which we had not yet read.

We will put the problem differently. Suppose a man from Mars or an intelligent Chinese or a Hindoo, who knows the English language but who has not read any of our literature and is not familiar with our culture, asked us to select for him ten or twelve books which would best introduce him into our life, history and literature. What would our selection be?

Here is our answer:

Non-Fiction

1—Outline of History. Wells.

2—Ethics and Evolution of Man. Nordau.

3—History of the Warfare of Science with Theology. Andrew D. White.

4—Life and Letters of Charles Darwin. Francis Darwin.

5—The Sexual Life of our Time. Iwan Bloch.

FICTION

6—The World of William Clissold. H. G. Wells.

7—An American Tragedy. Dreiser.

8—Oil! Upton Sinclair.

9—Faust. Goethe.

10—Oxford (or Stevenson's) Anthology of Verse.

This is the best we could do if limited to such a small number. Yet these ten books will give the intelligent man an idea of our history, of our ethics, of our dominant religion and of the struggle science had to go through before it secured a measure of freedom of thought and of speech; it will introduce him to the life and the work of perhaps the finest and greatest man the human race has produced, acquainting him at the same time with the fundamental basis of modern thought and science, i.e. Evolution, and will give him a fine survey of sexology, a branch of knowledge without which no civilized man's life can be complete.

The three novels chosen while great in themselves as novels all deal with modern life and touch upon problems of to-day, problems which are of genuinely vital interest to every intelligent man and woman. While great novels, they are at the same time treatises in sociology, thus covering the lacuna in this list which

contains no formal book on Sociology or Economics. The ninth book will give him the greatest drama in any language, and the anthology will acquaint him with the entire domain of poetry.

Assuming that the man from Mars hasn't read anything before, he will from the above ten books get a fairly good idea what we are and where we stand spiritually.

For good measure, we would put in the following:

1—The Iliad. Homer.

2—French Revolution. Carlyle.

3—The Story of Philosophy. William J. Durant.

4—The Genesis of the World War. H. F. Barnes.

5—The Sexual Crisis. Meisel-Hess.

The first will give our stranger an idea of the Greek genius; the second is an epic description of the most momentous upheaval in human history; the third will give him a fair idea as to who our "lovers of wisdom" were and what they thought; the fourth will help him to understand the causes of and place the responsibility for the most horrible and most inexcusable of all wars; the fifth will open his eyes as to the causes and the cure of the sexual misery in civilized society. In our opinion it would be difficult to make a better list of Fifteen Best Books.

PART II

Chapter XVI

SOME REMARKS ON PREVIOUS LISTS

As stated before and as the reader no doubt knows, several attempts have been made to prepare lists of best books. We are familiar with six such lists—three old ones, and three of recent date. The three old ones are by John Lubbock, whom we like better under this name than under his later acquisition, that of Right Hon. Lord Avebury; by Lord Acton and by Clement Shorter. Lord Acton's list is beneath criticism. First, it contains a number of books in French and German; a list intended for the general reader must be limited to that reader's language, to English in our case. Second, the character of the books recommended in this list is incredibly ridiculous. Lord Acton was a high-minded man, but a religious bigot, and many of the books he recommends deal with abstruse catholic theology. What should one say of books such as Baur's Vorlesungen über Dogmengeschichte, Hundshagen's Kirchenverfassungs geschichte, St. Vincent's Comminotorum, Rothe's Theologische Ethik, Nicholas of Cusa's Concordantia Catholica, etc., etc.? Literature, ancient and modern, as well as modern history is left out. In short, Acton's list might succeed in making a narrow-minded ignorant bigot—if it wouldn't permanently

disgust him with reading altogether—but not a cultured, broad-minded man.

Clement Shorter's list is more civilized, more modern, but it is too lightweight; it is devoted largely to fiction, to belles-lettres. It is a good list, but is not sufficiently many-sided.

Lubbock's list was probably the best at the time it was compiled; it is a fairly well balanced list. But we must take into consideration that Lubbock's list was made up forty years ago, and then it did not contain any books of living authors. So it is safe to say that the books recommended by Lubbock are at least fifty to seventy-five years old. And within that period some of the world's most significant books have seen the light of day. So while Sir John Lubbock's (or Lord Avebury's) list was a fairly good list in its day, it can be of but limited service to the eager man and woman of to-day.

The three lists of recent origin are (we know of no others) John Cowper Powys' One Hundred Best Books, One Hundred Best Books, chosen by C. Lewis Hind, and To Begin With by Raymond Pearl. Mr. Powys' list is excellent as far as it goes, but it is limited with three or four exceptions to belles-lettres; there are no books on history, philosophy, ethics, sociology, economics, etc.; in short no books on the questions of most vital interest to the present generation. A man may read all the books listed by Mr. Powys and still remain quite ignorant and narrow on all subjects that matter. In short, Mr. Powys' list corresponds to but one section of ours, but even in that

we find strange lacunæ; thus there is not mentioned even one work by Tolstoy, one of the world's greatest masters.

As to Mr. Hind's "best books," with the utmost charity we must pronounce it supremely commonplace and mediocre. He gives us, of course, the indispensable standbys, Pepy's Diary, Montaigne's Essays, The Compleat Angler, Spenser's Sonnets and Poems, The Old and The New Testament and the Apocrypha, The Confessions of St. Augustine, Religio Medici, Pilgrim's Progress, etc., etc., but he attempts also to be original and to contribute something of his own selection, and here are some samples of the books which he gives us as belonging to the world's one hundred best books: Richard Jefferies—*The Story of My Heart,* A. W. Kinglake—*Eothen,* William Cobbett—*Rural Rides,* Stow's Survey of London (John Stow lived between 1525-1605), etc. Such are the masterpieces recommended as among the world's best books to intellectually eager men and women of the second quarter of the 20th century. The list is in our opinion worthless; Sir Lubbock's list though written forty years ago and not containing any names of living writers is much superior to it.

To Begin With, by Prof. Raymond Pearl of Johns Hopkins University, the well-known biologist and biometrist, is a most charming little book. It is written in a delightfully humorous vein—a vein that one would not suspect in a hard working scientist—and is worth reading for itself. The seventy odd books that the author recommends are of high character, but they are

intended for a special class of reader or rather student —they are intended for University men who expect to devote themselves to science, and particularly to the sciences of biology and statistics.

As the author says: "At the outstart it should be explained that the University students for whom this list was primarily designed are looking forward, for the most part, to careers connected in some manner near or remote with pure biology or with public health. Mainly they want to become qualified biologists or vital statisticians or biometricians" (p. 19). Of the four chapters devoted to the list two are devoted exclusively to books on biology and biostatics; the other two to miscellaneous works—to general literature and biography. Taking into consideration the general narrow-mindedness of the American student and embryo scientist, Dr. Pearl has done an excellent piece of work in recommending general works which are bound to widen the student's horizon. But it is obviously not a serviceable list for the general non-university reader. However, we repeat, the book is so charmingly written that it is worth reading for itself, for the pleasure of the thing.

Ergo, there is, in our opinion, no satisfactory list of books for the modern man and woman of average intelligence, and of a curious, eager mind, who wish to acquire a broad culture and a sane humanistic outlook on life. This being the case, we thought it our duty to prepare such a Guide. The duty has proved a most pleasant one.

Chapter XVII

APROPOS CERTAIN CLASSICS AND INDISPENSABLES

We are, all of us or almost all of us, influenced by what we hear and read about people and things. To a greater or lesser extent we are practically all suggestible. The number of men who are quite immune to every form of suggestion is very small. Only the strongest and well-disciplined intellects are capable of judging people and things on their merits, of forming decisions uninfluenced by public opinion or by what passes as public opinion. This is true of small and great things. To take a commonplace example. A chorus girl with fair features and a mediocre voice who has had but mediocre success on the Paris stage in subordinate rôles suddenly gets a millionaire protector. She disappears for a time from the stage, then glowing accounts about her appearance before Europe's crowned heads begin to crop up in the papers; anecdotes and interviews and stories about her dresses and jewels and offers of marriage from princes become a frequent feature in the metropolitan press—and suddenly she is a great star; thousands of people crowd to see her, and what is more, the very same people who never saw anything in her before, now find that she

possesses a marvelous voice and a wonderfully beautiful face. When she is about to appear on the stage, the music is silenced and there is a hush throughout the audience—as if the Madonna herself was about to come out. And, at the same time, there are several prettier and more capable women with better voices in that same performance. What has done it? Suggestion. The same is true about pictures. Proclaim a certain picture as being the greatest work in the world, have the statement repeated far and wide, proclaim it as the settled, universally accepted opinion, and millions of people will agree with you and will see in it a beauty which isn't there. Literally millions of people see now a wonderfully mysterious beauty in the smile of La Gioconda, who never paid any attention to the picture before. It required the theft of the painting from the Louvre and the subsequent publicity connected with the attempt to recover it to make it famous. So for a while thousands of people saw beauty in and admired the futurist and cubist daubs that passed for paintings, proclaiming them even superior to the work of the old masters. As to the influence that carefully sown suggestion has in war or in spreading racial hatred it is not necessary to speak here. People can be actually hypnotized into believing that black is white and white is black.

Chapter XVIII

SHAKESPEARE AND THE BIBLE

We have long believed that in our evaluation of Shakespeare suggestion and hypnotization have played a not inconsiderable rôle. Whoever takes up Shakespeare, does so with an enormous, deeply-rooted, almost invincible prejudice in favor of the author. He has heard so much about Shakespeare being the greatest writer and possessing the greatest intellect that the world has ever produced, that he is bound to find there beauties and excellencies that aren't there. One could wish that a cultured man with a literary taste and keen judgment but who has never heard of Shakespeare, would take up his works and give his opinion of them. We confess that most of his dramas, comedies and tragedies bore us; we can derive no intellectual or esthetic pleasure from them. And we think it is unfair in giving a list of the ten or one hundred best books to give "Shakespeare Complete" as one book. Shakespeare's more or less authentic plays are some thirty-six in number, and we think it most unwise to suggest to a man who is asking for guidance to read all the thirty-six plays. Even such an admirer of Shakespeare as Frederic Harrison says that it is much better to know well eight or ten of Shakespeare's

plays than to read all the thirty-six superficially. In our opinion three or four would suffice, though of course there is no objection to anyone devoting himself to an intensive study of Shakespeare if he has the time and the desire. Only it must be borne in mind that his plays are devoid of any social problems, are not illuminated by social vision, while the characters in his historical plays are certainly false, different from what history shows them to have been.

As to Shakespeare's greatness as a writer opinions will differ, but we don't think there can be any difference of opinion as to his stature as a man. A great man is one who rises superior to his age. Shakespeare shared the superstitions, prejudices and antipathies of the England of his time with the commonest of marketwomen. And of sympathy with the people whose condition was most lamentable we can find no trace in any of his writings.

What we said about suggestion and hypnotization with reference to Shakespeare is also true, only in much greater degree, when applied to the Bible. From our earliest childhood we are so imbued with the sacredness and wonderful greatness of the book, that only rarely can one overcome the influence of the suggestion. The impression made on the soft, plastic brain-cells of the child is generally carried to the end of one's days. We had steeled ourselves long ago to judge of a book independently, uninfluenced by any outside opinions either for or against. And our opinion is that as *literature* the Bible is not a great book. To read it as a historical document, yes; to read it as an *obliga-*

tion, as a religious duty, yes; but to read it for itself as *great literature,* no. To this we cannot subscribe. And our judgment is quite an impartial one. We do not have the pugnacious, anticlerical complex, which used to be and sometimes still is designated as Voltairean, against everything of a religious nature. Again and again and again we have taken up the Bible, in a reverent mood, trying to read it and to find the beauty, the moral sublimity and the literary grandeur which others claim to find there; and each time we failed. And we read carefully Frazer's "Passages of the Bible Chosen for their Literary Beauty and Interest," and failed to be convinced. We therefore say that, *in our opinion,* to recommend the Bible as a great piece of literature is not fair. And then again, as with Shakespeare, the Bible is not one book. It is at least a dozen books; and one has no right to count it as one volume, because on Bible paper or otherwise it is printed as one volume. So there are editions of Shakespeare in one volume. There are some things in the Bible which are worth reading: The psalms of David, the Song of Solomon, the Book of Job, Ecclesiastes and the story of Ruth are the only ones we can enjoy. The Pentateuch, however, is readable, in a modern translation. The authorized English or the King James Version is to us repellent—in spite of the fact that one writer claims that the supreme literary excellence of the Authorized Version has made it the greatest of English classics, and that "owing to the superb beauty of its language, the Bible has an importance in our literature which is unparalleled elsewhere." The superb

beauty is in that writer's suggestible mind, and not in the book.

Those are our opinions about Shakespeare and the Bible which are considered the two invariably indispensable books in any list of best books. In our opinion they are not "indispensable," surely not in their entirety. Three or four of the dramatist's plays; and a few selections from the Bible will suffice.

We do not believe that on these two points we will find many people to agree with us. The conventional view about both Shakespeare and the Bible will probably prevail for many years, perhaps for centuries, to come. Fortunately, there is no particular harm in that view.

Chapter XIX

FRANCIS BACON ET AL

It is one of the fatuous errors of the orthodox Academic mind that because a book was of importance at the time it was published, therefore it *must* be read. This error has cost millions of people millions of hours, hours wasted on dull, dreary things, which could have been employed usefully and enjoyably. One of the authors on whom young men are made to waste many hours, is Francis Bacon, supposed to be one of the world's greatest intellects. Perhaps he was, though we consider him much, very much overrated. But whatever influence he may have exercised on the development of the exact sciences, neither as a scientist nor as a philosopher can he give us anything whatever now. Much of his philosophy is the threadbarest platitude; while his science is of course ridiculous. And we assert emphatically that one can get along well without having read a single line of Francis Bacon, Lord Chancellor of England, Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans.

We wish to give an illustration. Among the great epoch-making discoveries, William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was certainly one of the most important, and most useful. And yet what

would one think of a professor who would make his medical students learn about the circulation of the blood from Harvey's *De Motu Cordis,* On the Motion of the Heart and Blood in Animals? It would be considered an absurd waste of time. The medical student learns of the circulation of the blood from a modern—the most modern—physiology. After he has become a physician with a well-established practice, after he can afford abundant leisure, he may amuse himself, if he wishes, with Harvey's original essay. If he devotes himself specially to scientific medicine, to physiology or biology, then he must read it as a matter of course. But not so the average physician. And so it is with many "classical," "epoch-making," and "indispensable" books.

Here is not the place to go into an appraisal of the achievements of Francis Bacon, but a few examples of Bacon's science will no doubt prove interesting. He tells us that "Snow is colder than water because it hath more spirit in it and that quicksilver is the coldest of all metals because it is the fullest of spirit."

"As snow and ice holpen, and their cold activated by nitre or salt will turn water into ice, so it may be it will turn wood or stiff clay into stone." This from the great inductive, experimental philosopher. He was as full of superstitions as any half-witted old woman. Of course he believed in witches, but according to him "witches cannot hurt kings as easily as they can common people." People at that time believed in the "evil eye," but he even believed in the evil influence of an oblique eye. Here is what he says: "Anyone in the

moment of triumph can be injured by another who casts an envious eye, and the injury is greater when it comes from an oblique eye."

His medical knowledge was superb. Here are a few samples: "It is hard to cure a hurt in a Frenchman's head, but easy in his leg." With Englishmen it is just the contrary: "It is hard to cure a hurt in an Englishman's leg, but easy in his head."

To stop hemorrhage:

"Thrust the part that bleedeth into the body of a capon, new-ripped and bleeding. This will staunch the blood. The blood, as it seemeth, sucking and drawing up by similitude of substance the blood it meeteth with, and so itself going back."

Another good hemostatic is "the moss which groweth on the skull of an unburied dead man."

"Bracelets made of snakes are good for curing cramps."

"The skin of a wolf might cure the colic, because a wolf has great digestion."

Examples of his biologic knowledge: "You can make swallows white by putting ointment on the eggs before they are hatched." And this from the *experimental* scientist!

"As for living creatures, it is certain that their vital spirits are a substance compounded of an airy and flamy matter; and although air and flame, being free, will not mingle, yet bound in by a body that hath some fixing, will."

"If a woman about to become a mother eats a good many quinces and considerable coriander seed, the

child will be ingenious." And similar nonsense which would disgrace a modern half-wit.

Why do we devote so much space to Bacon? We take him as a type. There are dozens like him who are of absolutely no use to people of the twentieth century—whatever they may have been to those who lived and had their being in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries—and who yet are forced upon us. They figure in the catalogues of universities, they are given in various lists of "best books," you will find them in practically all Libraries of the World's Best Literature, The World's Supreme Classics, Five Foot Book Shelves, etc. I consider it a sin practiced on unsuspecting people.

The very dullness of those books, their heavy language, ponderous sentences, utterly obsolete words, ought to bar them from any list of "best books." The time that the average man has to spend on reading is limited, and if he spends it on books which give him nothing, he is robbed of time which he could devote to books which give him something.

Another point. We have known cases in which the attempt to read such things as Bacon's "The Advancement of Learning," his Essays, or Montaigne's "Essays," has disgusted the person with reading altogether. For the books seemed to them dull, wearisome, unintelligible and useless. They thought serious books were too "highbrow" for them and they gave up in despair. It is time that our opinion of the true value of some of the world's great and sacrosanct authors—their value for the modern man and woman—be ex-

pressed frankly and unequivocally. And we believe we are rendering a real service to the reader of this volume by telling him what he can safely and *beneficially* omit. Telling what not to read is only second in importance to the advice what to read.

It is time to shatter some of the old literary idols.

Just as in order to study chemistry, physics, electricity, pharmacology, biology, etc., we do not go to the pioneers, with their insufficient knowledge and fanciful hypotheses, but have recourse to the very latest works on the subject, so in the domains of philosophy, religion, ethics, economics, etc., we are not to be burdened with the immature phantasies of the ancients, the brutish minds of the middle ages, or the awakening intelligences of the renaissance; with the exception of a few masterpieces emanating from geniuses who belong to no age but are of all time, our choice of books may be limited to the literary products of the last one hundred years; and the proportion of such books should get larger and larger as we approach our own era.

Chapter XX

MONTAIGNE, HOBBES, DESCARTES, PASCAL

The reader will lose nothing by leaving out Montaigne. There is after all very, very little that thinkers of the 16th century can give us. Now and then one finds a clear, well-expressed thought in Montaigne's Essays, but the reader whom we have in view cannot afford to go through a wagonload of chaff in order to find a few grains of good wheat. And then the translation of his Essays by Florio (1603) is, to us, disagreeable, obnoxious. That Montaigne possessed a fine intellect is not denied, but he was too cautious, too prudent to express his thoughts with that courage, that freedom which are essential to an original thinker, if he is to influence his own and future generations. We could not find any striking thought in all his writings. His essay on Education of Children is readable, and perhaps for the 16th century it contained some worth-while suggestions, but to us of the 20th century it is of no value; it is decidedly, as are all of his writings, and we repeat, practically all the writings of the 16th and 17th centuries, *vieux jeu.*

Hobbes

Hobbes' Leviathan was an epoch-making book. In his ideas about religion, etc., Thomas Hobbes was

ahead of his time—wherefore he lived in constant fear of prosecution for heresy—but the book is really not worth reading, except for special students. Here and there, there is a good passage, worth perusal even now, but too much time must be wasted to discover such passages. Hobbes' Leviathan, and even its first part, "Of Man," had served its purpose, and as far as the general reader is concerned, we may honestly say about it: *Requiescat in Pace.*

Descartes

There is no question that René Descartes was a great mathematical genius; and his philosophy had a powerful influence on modern thought. His Discours de la Méthode (Discourse on Method) is considered a classic. And yet we cannot conscientiously recommend it to our readers. If they wish to have an idea of his method of reasoning, they have but to read Part IV of the Discourse in which occurs his famous maxim *Cogito ergo Sum*—I think, therefore I am—and from which he deduces "logically" the existence of God and a soul. The existence or non-existence of a deity and a soul is not here under discussion, but Descartes' attempt to *prove* their existence is infantile. And though he deserves great credit for his influence in spreading skepticism in Europe, his writings are not at the present time worth reading.

Pascal

We have not included Pascal in our list, because though a mathematical genius, as a philosopher Pascal

has nothing to say to modern thinking men. His *Pensées* (Thoughts) have been extravagantly lauded. Here is what one writer, for instance, selects as some of Pascal's supreme "thoughts."

"The heart has reasons unknown to reason; we know it in a thousand things. I aver that the heart naturally loves the universal being, and naturally loves itself, according as it devotes itself to one or the other; and it hardens itself against one or the other according to its choice. You have rejected the one and held to the other: is it by reason that you love yourself? It is the heart which is conscious of God, not the reason. This is faith—God evident to the heart, and not to the reason. . . .

"I should have soon quitted pleasures, they say, if I had faith. And I say to you, You would soon have faith had you quitted pleasures. Thus it is for you to begin. If I could I would give you faith, and thus prove the truth of what you say. But I cannot. But you can, indeed, quit the pleasures, and prove if what I tell you is true."

No doubt there are people to whom the above means something. They may even get into ecstasy over it. To us it means nothing. It is rather, if the truth be told, drivel. And so are most of his "thoughts"; either mystical nonsense or trite commonplaces. We therefore consider it a pity to waste one's limited time on writers like Pascal.

Chapter XXI

SPINOZA, LOCKE, HUME, COMTE

Among the, alas! very, very few real saints that the human race has produced, Baruch Spinoza is one of the saintliest. The memory of his great and noble soul will remain in the hearts of cultured men as long as humanity persists. His influence on philosophy and ethics has been incalculable. And yet we should not advise our readers—except those who specialize in philosophy—to read his Ethics or his Politics. His books make heavy reading, and we have advanced so much beyond Spinoza in religion, politics and ethics that his works can give us very little, in fact, nothing at all. But as in the case with all truly great men who have influenced the thought of mankind, we must know something about him—what sort of a man he was, what he stood for, how he influenced the world's thought. Frederic Pollock's *Spinoza's Life and Philosophy* will answer the purpose admirably. The Chapter on Spinoza in Durant's Story of Philosophy is also excellent.

Locke

In John Locke, author of the Essay Concerning Human Understanding, we have the first modern philosopher, who speaks a modern easily understandable

language. Locke may be considered the founder of modern materialism; his ideas on tolerance, liberty, education mark a great advance over those of his predecessors. And yet we would hesitate to recommend his Essay to our readers. But his Thoughts concerning Education are quite admirable and are still worth reading. They were greatly in advance of their time when published, and his suggestions have not yet been fully realized even at this time, except in isolated instances.

Hume

Hume went further than Locke—he lived at a later period—in his skepticism; he was as far advanced as the Encyclopedists of the 18th century with many of whom he was in personal touch. His History of England is of course outdated and is not worth looking at. But his philosophical writings still retain considerable vitality, and some chapters, for instance, of his An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding are still worth reading. This is particularly true of Section X in which the author denies the reality of Miracles, a bold act which created him numerous enemies among the orthodox bigots.

Auguste Comte

The founder of Positivism had a deep love for humanity, and it is his humanitarianism, his Religion of Humanity, more than any other feature of his Positive Philosophy, that appealed to idealistic young men, and to emotional, not very clear-thinking men of more advanced age. The writer in his young days was a very

ardent admirer of Comte and was proud to call himself a Positivist. But later on, on examining the philosophy critically, he perceived its hollowness, and its futility as a philosophy of life. What particularly turned the present writer against Comte, changing his admiration into contempt, was a study of Comte's Positivist Calendar, in which he substituted the names of benefactors of humanity for the traditional Catholic saints. Some of the names in that calendar can only be explained on the score of feeble-mindedness or a peculiar moral or mental perversion. As an example it is sufficient to mention that among humanity's benefactors, the saints in the religion of humanity, he puts Innocent III, that brutal, bloodthirsty pope who instigated, encouraged and approved the Albigensian massacres, one of the bloodiest deeds in history (more fiendish than St. Bartholomew's night), during which men, women and children of the tenderest ages were ruthlessly slaughtered ("kill the innocent and the guilty: God will know to separate them") because of alleged "heresy." The entire population was exterminated, one of the finest parts of France being converted into a desert. And there are dozens of such names in Comte's "humanitarian" calendar.

Briefly stated, though possessed of enormous erudition and though unquestionably filled with love for mankind, Auguste Comte was a muddle-headed mystic, a fanatical agnostic Catholic—a most grotesque combination—and he has absolutely nothing to give us. We must say about him as about many others: *Requiescat in Pace.* Let him rest in peace.

Chapter XXII

SCHOPENHAUER AND NIETZSCHE

In spite of the fact that Schopenhauer is pictured as an old repellent grouch, in spite of the fact that he was the apostle of philosophic pessimism, he is worth reading. Not his chief work, The World as Will and Idea; it would be a waste of time to try to digest that work, but his Selected Essays, his Wit and Wisdom, his Aphorisms, contain many brilliant original ideas and make one think. And he certainly did not advise people to be steeped in gloom, to wear a mournful countenance. On the contrary, though he himself was a very unhappy man and of a detestable temperament (no doubt due in part at least to his syphilitic infection) he appreciated and advocated cheerfulness as one of the greatest of gifts. Here is what the gloomy philosopher says about cheerfulness:

Nothing conduces so directly to happiness as cheerfulness. It is a quality which is its own immediate reward. He who is gay has always reason for being so, namely, the fact that he is gay. Cheerfulness alone can make up for the loss of every other possession, while nothing can take its place. We may be young, handsome, rich, and high in station; still, estimating our happiness, the question will be asked: Are we cheerful with it all? But if we see a person who is

cheerful, no matter whether he be young, or old, straight of limb or deformed, poor or rich, he is happy. Therefore let us open wide the door to cheerfulness whenever it knocks. It can never come amiss. Instead of thinking thus, however, we often hesitate whether to admit it at all, and begin to reflect whether we really have every cause for contentment, or fear that gayety will disturb our serious thoughts and anxious problems. But what good these will do is very uncertain, while cheerfulness is a direct gain.

This counsel might be taken to heart by more than one man and woman.

Nietzsche

At one time there was quite a Nietzsche cult. His admirers hailed him as one of the world's greatest philosophers; the stupidest and most outrageous of his dicta was cherished as a revelation coming by direct revelation from the deity. In spite of occasional bits of wisdom, Nietzsche's writings have on the whole been most obnoxious to us, and he is one of the writers whose work we consider distinctly pernicious and immoral. And we do not use the world immoral in its conventional sense, but in its real sense, in the sense of injurious, anti-social. He extolled brute force, crime and exploitation, he spoke with exultation about primitive man who was "a beast of prey, a magnificent blond brute, ranging about and lusting for booty and victory," and he was enchanted because those "unchained beasts of prey were free from every social restraint; in the innocence of their wild beast conscience they returned as exultant monsters from a

horrible train of murder, incendiarism, rapine, torture, with an arrogance and composure as if nothing but a student's prank had been perpetrated." And these rapacious murderers were the noble races who conquered and enslaved the weaker and ignoble races. These rantings would be laughable if they had not had a most pernicious effect on Germany. Every exploiter, every blood-lusting militarist found moral justification for crushing the weak members of society, for exploitation and for wholesale murder called war. And speaking of war, if Nietzsche had written nothing but what he did write in justification of, in the praise of war, he would stand forever condemned. This is what he wrote:

> It is mere illusion and pretty sentiment, to expect much (even anything at all) from mankind if it forgets how to make war. As yet no means are known which call so much into action as a great war, that rough energy born of the camp, that deep impersonality born of hatred, that conscience born of murder and cold-bloodedness, that fervor born of effort in the annihilation of the enemy, that proud indifference to loss, to one's own existence, to that of one's fellows, to that earthquake-like soul-shaking which a people needs when it is losing its vitality.—(Human, all too Human, No. 477.)

No blood-intoxicated militarist ever said or wrote anything as bad as that. And our object in mentioning Nietzsche is simply to warn our readers against his irrational, sophistical ranting. Of science he knew nothing and he attacked Christianity for the only things that gave it a *raison d'être,* namely because it brought

the notions of pity, compassion and equality to the world! In our opinion there is nothing that he wrote that is worth reading. His chief works are: Thus Spoke Zarathustra; Human, all too Human, Beyond Good and Evil, and The Genealogy of Morals, and, we repeat, that while here and there one finds a clever aphorism, a biting epigram, the whole is too vast a desert to make it worth while to search for an oasis.

Chapter XXIII

THE DIVINE COMEDY AND PARADISE LOST

Confession is good for the soul and we confess that we are not an unprejudiced judge when dealing with such works as Dante's and Milton's masterpieces. We have read those poems and while we recognize that they are fine poetic productions they utterly fail to touch us emotionally. This is no doubt due to the fact that the subjects with which the poems deal are mere superstitions, and pernicious superstitions at that, and that their effect is to spread and to fortify superstition. It is not that hell, purgatory, paradise, satan, angels were mere poetic, imaginative conceptions to the authors; no, they believed in their reality, and hence the harmful effect. According to Dante's naïve belief, the people who lived the most virtuous lives, but who were not baptized, even though it be not their fault because they were born before Jesus came into the world, will not be admitted to Paradise. They will have to remain forever in hell. True he puts them in the first circle of hell—but what conception of justice the great poet had! And altogether the horrors of the various hells with their yells, tortures and burnings give us the shivers. And we cannot conscientiously recommend it to our readers. But many critics consider

The Divine Comedy one of the greatest masterpieces of all time. Here for instance is what Abbé Lamennais says about it:

"Grand, terrible and lugubrious is the immense apparition. One feels as if witnessing a mighty funeral, and hearing the service of the dead in a huge cathedral draped in black. Yet, meanwhile, a breath of life, destined to assume a higher and purer development than that which has expired, passes through the aisles, and rises to the vaulted roof of the immense edifice—the quickening of a new life thrills through its mighty womb. The great poem is at once a tomb and a cradle —the splendid tomb of a world passing away, the cradle of a dawning brighter world to come. It is a porch that unites two temples—the temple of the past and the temple of the future. The past has deposited therein its religion, its ideas, its science, as the Egyptians deposited their kings and symbolic gods in the sepulchers of Thebes and Memphis. The future brings to it its aspirations and the germs of its progress, swathed in the newborn language of a splendid poetry. It is a mystic infant that draws its life from the two sources of sacred tradition and profane fiction—Moses and St. Paul, Homer and Virgil. Its glance turned towards Greece and Rome announces Petrarch, Boccaccio, and a host to come; its thirst for light and knowledge, its eager search into the mysteries of the universe and its laws and constitution, foretell Galileo. Night still broods over the earth, but the horizon is streaked with the coming dawn."

While, as stated before, we cannot put the Divina

Commedia among the indispensable books for our readers, it would be a great mistake not to know something about Dante, for he was a great and noble man. At least a small biography of him like that by J. Knight should be read, as well as a few Cantos of the Divine Comedy in either Cary's or Longfellow's translation.

Also, Milton as a man is to us more important than his Paradise Lost and Regained. He was a passionate lover of freedom, and his prose Aeropagitica is in our opinion more important than his poetry. A very excellent little biography giving a fine estimate of the man and of his work is the one by Richard Garnett. Its two hundred pages give us practically all we want to know about the great puritan poet and defender of freedom of the press.

Chapter XXIV

RABELAIS AND BOCCACCIO

François Rabelais was one of the foremost writers of France and one of the world's greatest genuine humorists. He played a not inconsiderable rôle in freeing the Renaissance mind from the hypocrisy and false hateful asceticism of the church. He has rendered humanity a great service by his satirizing of the degraded monkish life of the time, and those who love obscenity and broad jokes will not easily give up their Rabelais. And perhaps it would be a pity not to make the acquaintance, at least a cursory one, of Gargantua, Pantagruel, Panurge, Friar John, etc. And yet I cannot recommend Rabelais as an "indispensable" author. Those who like this kind of thing will continue to like it. But we believe that our readers can get along quite well without Rabelais. There are more important, or rather more necessary, authors.

Practically the same may be said about Boccaccio who lived two centuries before Rabelais. Boccaccio rendered signal service to the Italian language and he is rightly called "the father of Italian prose." His Decameron stories are amusing and they served as an efficient antidote to the monkish hypocrisy and priestly degradation of the 14th century. But his

Decameron is now a source of amusement only for messenger boys and for old roués. It still possesses some aphrodisiac power for susceptible people of both sexes and all ages, the same as Balzac's Contes Drolatiques and other smutty stories do, but we are not of the opinion that aphrodisia is one of the legitimate functions of literature.

Chapter XXV

VOLTAIRE AND ROUSSEAU

Voltaire will serve as an excellent text for certain reflections on the writers and literatures of former centuries. While not an admirer of Voltaire's character, we consider him one of the great *benefactors of humanity;* lovers of mankind and fighters for intellectual freedom will be eternally indebted to him. In the 18th century the church in France was morally at its lowest level; it was cruel, arrogant and most avaricious; it was crushing the life out of the nation, both spiritually and materially. Prison and worse than prison threatened everyone who dared to express a decent, free, noble thought. And it was the diminutive David Voltaire who fearlessly went to meet the Goliath of cruelty and superstition and who vanquished him; temporarily at least. If France, and the world at large, commenced to breathe freely, it was due to Voltaire more than to any other single individual. And, we repeat, among humanity's true benefactors he deserves an honored place. And yet we do not include his works in our list. For now his books have little to give us except some pleasant amusement. One may enjoy his Candide, Zadig or Micromegas, but that is all we can now get out of Voltaire's books: some pleas-

ant amusement. But not to know anything about Voltaire, about the rôle he played in the intellectual liberation of the world would be a real loss; it would be a deplorable lacuna. His life and what he accomplished are of real interest and importance, and a good biography of him is indispensable. One of the very best is John Morley's Voltaire, and we have included that in our list.

What we said about Voltaire, is also applicable to a certain degree to Rousseau. Rousseau's influence in preparing France for the Revolution was great, in spite of the fact that he was a psychopath and in religion a most intolerant reactionary. His Confessions are worth reading as a psychological document, remarkable for its naïveté and sincerity. But with the rest of his work—his Social Contract, Emile, Nouvelle Héloïse, The Savoyard Vicar—one can very well dispense. But again, as with Voltaire, not to know *about* Rousseau and his influence on 18th century Europe would be a real loss. And the best work about Rousseau was written by John Morley. Morley's Rousseau is a permanent addition to the world's literature.

Chapter XXVI

DIDEROT AND THE ENCYCLOPEDISTS

A word about Diderot. Diderot was a noble soul; gentle, loving and selfless. We have always had a warmer spot in our heart for him than for any of the other Encyclopedists. And the influence of the Encyclopedia, to which Diderot gave his life, was tremendous; an influence that was not limited to France but extended all over intellectual Europe. Each volume was awaited with impatience and devoured with eagerness as it made its not very regular appearance. Some articles exerted an overwhelming influence; for, at the time they appeared they were novel, bold, daring, and expounded truths which then were new and important. But who would think of recommending to a reader asking for guidance the enormous tomes of Diderot's Encyclopedia? We look at them with respect and affection as at a once valuable work of enlightenment, but read them?—Heaven forfend. The Encyclopedia has served its purpose, has done its honorable work, and now we must let it rest in honor and peace on the topmost shelves. But we must know something at least about Diderot, and here again John Morley who knew France of the 18th century as few men did will help us out. His Diderot is shorter than his Rous-

seau or Voltaire, but is just as charming, just as full of worth-while information, just as keen in its analysis of the man and his work.

To repeat: we do not consider it necessary to read the writings of Voltaire, Rousseau and Diderot, but we do consider it necessary to know about them and their contributions to freedom and to the treasury of human intelligence. And the man to write about such men must himself be a man of high achievements. And such a man was John Morley.

And we will take this occasion to say that we consider Morley's method the ideal method of biography. He tells us not only about the man, his characteristics, what he ate, whom he married, who his friends were, with whom he quarreled, but what is much more important, he tells us all about the man's work of which he makes a critical appraisement; so that when you get through with a Morley biography, you know exactly where the man stood, what he amounted to intellectually, and what his contribution was to human progress.

Chapter XXVII

MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS

The Prince. *By Niccolo Machiavelli.* This "masterpiece" may well be consigned to the topmost attic or to the nethermost cellar. It is both a useless and an obnoxious book. Useless, because, the fates be thanked, we have practically rid ourselves of princes; those that still exist are almost figureheads, and their power for evil or good is greatly limited. Obnoxious, because of its damnable morality. A sample or two of Machiavellian morals: "And here comes in the question whether it is better to be loved rather than feared, or feared rather than loved. It might perhaps be answered that we should wish to be both; but since love and fear can hardly exist together, if we must choose between them, it is far safer to be feared than loved." "A Prince, and most of all a new Prince, cannot observe all those rules of conduct in respect whereof men are accounted good, being often forced, in order to preserve his Princedom, to act in opposition to good faith, charity, humanity and religion." He advises and justifies every sort of villainy, because if success crowns the Prince's efforts, "the means will always be judged honorable and be approved by everyone." And many princes, kings, emperors and diplomats took Machia-

velli's book as their bible, and acted accordingly. And yet we are still advised to read this book as an indispensable classic!

Religio Medici. *By Dr. Thomas Browne.* We spent many weary hours on this book. First, because Browne was a fellow physician, and, second, because from many sides it was recommended as a wonderful production, we thought we *had* to read it. It is difficult for us to understand the taste and the judgment of men of culture who recommend such a thing to a modern man or woman. To us it is utter commonplace. The ideas are those of a grocer of the 17th century; the style is dull, heavy, cumbersome; many of the words are unintelligible and require a glossary. I fail to find the "sonorous periods" or the "enchanting musical cadences" of his prose of which some writers speak.

Dr. Thomas Browne was a fine man, possessed of an admirable character and sweet temper, and was as good a physician as there was in the 17th century (which isn't saying much). But that is no reason why we should be asked to read his leisurely essays which he wrote three centuries ago. We must always bear in mind that there are books which served a good purpose at the time they were published; but now they are dead timber; and are of interest only as historical documents. To the special student they are of value, but not to the general reader. They are for antiquarians who have nothing else to do.

Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. We know that our opinion of this book will appear arch-heretical and

shocking. We do not wish to hurt anybody's sensibilities, but as in this, as in all our other books, we have taken a vow to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, as we see it, we therefore must not evade the responsibility of expressing our opinion. In our judgment this book is just an aggregation of silly nonsense; a solid mass of superstition whose effect cannot be otherwise than to befuddle the deluded and credulous reader still further, to drag him into the bog of fanaticism still deeper. The fact that the book has had an enormous circulation, its popularity being, it is claimed, next to that of the Bible, is of course no proof of its value.

It is difficult for us to understand how that book can be recommended to mature men and women of the 20th century, as a "best" book.

THE COMPLEAT ANGLER. *By Izaak Walton.* An overrated book, and in our opinion not worth reading.

SUMMARY

To summarize and to emphasize: Nothing is further from our thought than to deny the significance of men like Montaigne, Bacon, Descartes, etc., for their time, or to minimize their influence on the progress of human thought. But as in the physical sciences, in physics, chemistry, physiology, embryology, medicine, etc., we do not send the inquirer to the books on those subjects written two hundred or even one hundred years ago, no matter how important and path-breaking they may have been in their time, so in history, philosophy, psy-

chology, ethics, political economy, etc., we have no right to burden the average intelligent reader with the timid and veiled gropings in those disciplines of two and three centuries ago. In these domains as well as in the physical sciences the present can give us much more than the past.

We must always bear in mind the distinction between the special student and the general intelligent reader anxious to acquire a genuinely broad culture, embodying a sane and humane outlook on Humanity and Its Problems.

We see this difference even in special domains of science. Let us take medicine for instance. The scientific physician, the medical historian, will read everything of importance from Hippocrates, Galen, Sydenham, Paracelsus down to our day. The practical physician will leave those worthies alone and will devote himself to the practical task of how best to cure and prevent disease. He will try to become a competent physician and surgeon; and for this purpose he will study the *latest* books on the subject. And it isn't even true that studying the old so-called authorities will be of any benefit to him in his task of diagnosing and curing disease. Quite the contrary may be the case. They may mislead him. For much of what is in the old medical books is false; and what is true has been incorporated, in a refined and more exact form, in the new books. And so it is in many other domains of thought.

We do not wish to be deprived of a single masterpiece of antiquity or of the late middle ages. But if a choice were to be made between everything written

since the beginning of history and say 1700, and everything published since 1700 to our day, we would have to choose the latter. Perhaps we should rather make it 1600 instead of 1700, as we do not wish to lose Shakespeare and Milton. There are some however who go to extremes. We had a student who said that nothing was worth reading that was published prior to 1859. And there are many men now who cannot read anything published prior to August, 1914. It is only in painting and sculpture apparently that the old is superior to the new. Perhaps it is because the old artists took their work more seriously and were not in such a hurry; they worked more slowly and were not so eager for financial rewards.

APPENDIX

THE STUDY OF SEXOLOGY AMONG THE LAITY, AND THE EIGHT BEST BOOKS ON SEX

By L. C. Fraina

The other day I was engaged in a discussion with a group of radicals. The subject was sex.

One of these radicals thought it wasn't necessary to agitate questions of sex; totally unnecessary.

"This sex propaganda," said he, "is an artificial one. It is an expression and a problem of the decadent Middle Class. It is not related to the general cultural movement of our day, nor to the great social issues that await decision. It's an illegitimate thing, and distracts attention from the real problem. And then in itself it does more harm than good. It is creating a mass of rankly reactionary sexological literature, and a class of people who smugly think they know something about sex when they really don't know a damn thing about it."

Gently but firmly I told him that his indictment was misleading, and his general attitude reactionary. I don't believe I convinced him; but then some people are beyond being convinced.

The awakening popular interest in Sexology is the expression of a complex of factors of the utmost social significance.

It means, for one thing, the rapid *socialization of science,* in a new form. The socialization of science proceeding at

the close of the 19th century, symbolized in Haeckel's stupendous popularizing activity, was the socialization of pure science, as it were, of its abstract principles. Valuable as it was, it did not affect intimately the lives and well-being of the people. The socialization of Sexology, however, embodies the identical struggle for the freedom of thought waged by Huxley and Haeckel, *plus a pragmatic purpose* that affects intimately the immediate *desires, needs, struggles and aspirations for happiness of the modern man and woman.*

Equally, it is an expression of the fundamental collapse of our ethical systems and the "hush-it-up!" attitude. Moreover, it expresses the urge for a rational human sanction to govern our actions—not a "rational" sanction issuing from a new Deity in the guise of Science, but a sanction issuing from a socialized and humanized science arising out of the life of the people itself.

The spirit of modernity seeks to control dynamically our social destiny; equally, it seeks to control dynamically our temperamental and sexual life, to make man the master of nature, instead of being the sport of nature.

Essentially and concretely, the measure of civilization is man's understanding and control of nature. This means an understanding and control that does not alone manifest itself in the objective achievements of technical progress, but in the subjective process of intensifying the happiness and personality of the individual. And precisely in this lies the social significance of the movement to popularize Sexology.

But it seems inherent in all great movements that along with potential good it generates potential evil; and the movement under discussion is no exception.

One of the evils is the crop of sexological literature the characteristics of which are half-baked information, good

intentions but vicious ideas, or downright ignorance and fraud. After all, there is such a thing as advance in sexological thought, and literature for the laity should above all be abreast of the times, expressing the very newest ideas in the science of sex. Nor is the layman an infant to be coddled, or to be given information in small doses lest it hurt him. The layman stands on his own feet, and should be treated as an independent and mature being entitled to the truth and nothing but the truth.

Another evil is the tendency of a layman to read an article or two on sex, or even a book, and then consider himself as informed fully and an adept. This is dangerous; nor does it follow that its avoidance implies an intensive study of Sexology. That is reserved for the specialist; but the layman can read half a dozen books on sex, if he really wants to know and control his sexual destiny,—as he should.

That a large number of the intelligent laity appreciate the subtle dangers of these evils, is proven by the many inquiries for suggestions as to a course of reading on Sexology that is not too intensive, and still comprehensive enough to yield a well-rounded and adequate knowledge of the subject. To meet this general demand, the following course of reading is suggested:

1—Sex Knowledge for Men.

2—Woman; Her Sex and Love Life.

3—Sexual Problems of Today.

4—The Treatment of Sexual Impotence and other Sexual Disorders in Men and Women.

The above four books are by Dr. W. J. Robinson.

5—The Sexual Crisis, by Grete Meisel-Hess.

6—Sex and Society, by Havelock Ellis.

7—The Sexual Life of our Times, by Iwan Bloch.

8—The Sexual Question, by August Forel.

A study of these books will equip the intelligent man and woman to cope with any sexual problem, of either theoretical or practical interest, that may confront them.

These books are authoritative; they do not indulge in the cabalistic jargon that some scientists use, much in the mystifying manner of the astrologers of old; and they very happily combine theory *and* practice. They are instinct with fullness of scientific knowledge, clearly and vividly expressed; and throb with the social spirit characteristic of our Age, and that recognizes science as an instrument to promote the social and human needs of the world.

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